The Durian Tourist’s Guide

THAILAND
Lindsay Gasik
The Durian Tourist’s Guide (to) Thailand. Copyright © 2014 by Lindsay Gasik. All rights reserved. Printed in a State of Faith in International Durian Love and the Worldwide Web.

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Donations joyfully accepted at www.yearofthedurian.com.

This book was designed to provide information to those wishing to travel in Thailand to eat durian and as well as enhancing the durian experience through education.

Many thanks to Elango Velautham of the Singapore Botanical Garden for use of the photo of D. griffithii and to Salma Idris of the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institution for the use of the photo of D. lowianus.

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If you have further questions, don’t hesitate to contact us at durianyear@gmail.com.
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To eat Durians is a new sensation worth a voyage to the East to experience.

- Alfred Russel Wallace

How to Use this Guidebook

In 2012, my husband Rob and I decided to spend an entire year traveling to explore the durian; that spiky, smelly monstrosity of a fruit that has become an iconic part of Southeast Asia. It was a fantastic year of travel, cultural exploration, and excuses to indulge in the rich, multifaceted flavors of durian. Our adventures took us through 9 countries and 12 months of non-stop durian consumption, which we shared on our blog www.yearofthedurian.com.

As it turns out, we’re not the only ones who travel to eat durian. We soon began receiving emails from durian lovers all over the world requesting tips for planning a vacation focused on getting the best durian. What was needed, we realized, was a guidebook, a sort of Lonely Planet for all the durian tourists out there.

This guide is designed for those of you who have already cultivated a love so deep and a desire so compelling that you want to travel for durian. We’ve tried to think of
everything someone traveling with durian on the brain could need—from basic information like how to choose a ripe fruit and navigate the market to very specific details like maps and contact details for farms. As a bonus, we’ve included a guidebook to Thailand’s other fruits, which you can download here.

From the Table of Contents you can click straight to the main sections of the eBook. Start with our Introduction to get a feel for when and where you’d like to go and how you’d like to integrate your durian desires with your other travel needs. To get a better understanding of the durian situation in Thailand, read on to Durian Basics where you’ll find a short history of durian in Thailand, a field guide for identifying different durian varieties, and more specific information about the durian season.

Durian Practicalities helps with the little, day-to-day requirements of a durian obsession, like making sure you bring enough money to satisfy your cravings and tips for choosing a good durian and communicating politely with the durian sellers. Travel Tips outlines basic travel information to help you get around as well as listing our favorite resources for traveling in Thailand.

The last section, Durian Regional Guide, focuses on 16 individual provinces that are of interest to Durian Tourists, either because they are a significant producer of durian or because they have some kind of durian-related attraction. This is where you’ll find durian orchard directories and maps of the area showcasing farms, homestays, markets, and durian growing regions.

The maps in this book are designed to provide an overview of the area so that you can get a feel for where things are in relation to each other. Each map image is linked to an interactive Google Map so that you can also get more precise directions to your chosen durian destination. Simply click on the image to get redirected to the Google Map in your preferred web browser.
And just in case those in your travel party are not quite as interested in durian as you are, we've suggested some Fruitless Activities (bad pun intended) to keep everyone entertained.

If you're having trouble finding farms or getting in touch with farmers, ask your hotel staff or the folks at the local Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) office for help. They may think you're a funny farang for asking about durian, but will most likely be more than helpful. Please remember, this book is about traveling for durian, and is not designed to be the sole source for all your travel needs. Make sure to check out some of our favorite resources for traveling in Thailand and do your own research as well.

Whether you’re a hardcore fanatic who wants to design and plan your entire vacation around durian or the casual traveler who wants to know where to get the goods along the way, we've designed this guidebook with you in mind. You may or may not want to spend an entire year traveling for durian, but whether you have a week or a few months we hope this book helps you enjoy your vacation and your durian.

Happy Hunting!

**Rob and Lindsay**

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Introduction

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Introducing Thailand and its Durian

There's something for everyone in Thailand. From the misty hillsides of the exotic north to the idyllic tropical islands of the south, from the neon lights and unapologetically seedy nightlife to the colorful Buddhist temples, or from the hectic hustle of a downtown fruit market to the peaceful silence of its orchards, Thailand is a contradiction interred in one fun country. Backpackers, beach goers, spiritualists, environmentalists, spa rats, and durian enthusiasts are all drawn to Thailand's siren call; an allure that brought nearly 16 million visitors to Bangkok in 2012. Some of them went just to eat durian.

After all, Thailand is the cradle of durian cultivation and development. Thailand grows more durian than any other country, producing nearly six times that of its neighbor Malaysia. The country's plethora of export factories ship frozen durians all over the world, and chances are if you've ever had a durian in your home country, it came from Thailand. Durian stands line roads and dominate fruit markets, and trucks piled high
with durians are a common sight on any national highway. During the season the fruit is truly unavoidable. No trip to Thailand could be complete without a durian experience of some sort, whether a gustatory revelation or a funny story to tell the folks back home.

That's why it's a haven for tourists who leave home with durian on the brain. With so much durian piling up during the season, it's easy to combine a lust for durian with other, more normal tourism activities like hanging out on beaches, getting massages, and taking pictures of gilded temples and giant Buddhas. But those who want to really satiate a durian obsession and head to the orchards will quickly find themselves miles away from the beaten tourist trail and in for an authentic cultural experience.

Many people find that there are really two Thailand, and likewise, two sides to Thai durian. The glamorized beaches, spas, and ever-smiling people of travel magazines exist in tandem with a rougher, less urbanized Thailand that is in many ways more foreign and exciting. Cities listed in Lonely Planet are just the tip of the iceberg—the majority of the country consists of the overlooked farmlands. It is estimated that as much as 66% of the population lives outside of cities in rural areas.
So few travelers venture away from the tourist-friendly beaches and neon cities that great swathes of the country are left virtually untouched by the tourism industry and its vices. This is where durian grows. Those followers of durian who are brave or devout enough to venture into the country may find themselves immersed in a depth of Thai culture not experienced by most Western tourists.

Likewise, Thai durian is more diverse and multifaceted than might be imagined given its role as an important export commodity. Despite the wide adoption of industrial practices like monocropping, and the fact that nearly 100% of durians grown for export are of one variety, Monthong, Thai durian remains as diverse as its country with plenty to explore.
Thai people have been eating durian for hundreds of years, perhaps thousands in the jungles down south where durian may have evolved. Towering jungle leviathans planted six or seven generations ago still drop fruit, each with a rich, silky flesh flavored from the ages. Old varieties bred by farmers of long ago haunt orchards, while durians grow wild in the national parks and forested areas throughout Southern Thailand.

Over 234 types of durian from the not-long-distant past are registered with the government with a wide range of textures, odors, colors, and tastes. While the hugely fleshy and insipidly sweet varieties tend to dominate the export trade, Thai durians come in flavors ranging from vanilla or butterscotch custard to milk chocolate, caramelized onions, or even a sulfurous egg-iness relished by those with a thing for the savory.
Many of these varieties can be found at the farms of diehard durian lovers who carefully preserved and protected the old durians, sometimes at extensive personal effort. These people are part of a resistance to industrialization that encourages organic farming practices and a return to the small, biodiverse farm. Recently, Thailand's Crown Princess Sirindhorn even asked durian farmers to plant the old durian varieties in order to preserve national history and genetic variety.

The growing nationwide interest in healthy farming practices makes Thailand an exciting place for permaculturalists and agricultural innovators with plenty of opportunities for volunteer work and WWOOF Programs (World Wide Opportunities On Organic Farms). Some farmers even offer homestays to paying guests who just want to relax in a natural setting and enjoy the bounty of the farm. It's an alternative form of tourism that's been termed “agro-tourism,” a spin-off of eco-tourism, that is designed to support small-scale, environmentally and community-friendly farming.

Whatever your travel needs and desires Thailand is a great place to chill out and embark on a gustatory exploration of Asia's most prized fruit.
When To Go

If you're traveling for durian, you'll want to go when it's durian season. But since different parts of Thailand have different durian seasons, the Durian Tourist has more to consider than those on just a casual vacation.

Durian tends to ripen just before or at the beginning of the rainy season. In the North, Central, and Eastern provinces, the year is split between a dry, hot summer from January to April and a thunderously wet monsoon season, which begins in late May or June.

In contrast, the Southern provinces experience rain more consistently throughout the year, producing the wet, equatorial rainforest that allows durian to fruit multiple times per year on a schedule that can be hard to predict. Due to the various microclimates, it's nearly always durian season somewhere if you know where to look.

If you wish to visit the Central or Eastern regions, shoot for late April or May when durians are ripe, but before the rains begin in earnest. It is the hottest time of the year, but the heat makes the durian sweeter and the texture thicker and creamier.
If the South has caught your imagination, you're certain to find durian between July and September and from December to January. Just remember to bring your umbrella.

For more specific information on regional seasons and fruiting times of specific durian varieties, check out the Seasonal Guide.

**Where To Go**

Each part of Thailand offers something different to both the casual tourist and those traveling for durian. It all depends on when you can go on vacation and what kind of durian or travel experience you're looking for.

You'll have more choices of established varieties in the Central and Eastern regions, where durian has been intensively cultivated. For the widest array of varieties, head to Nakhon Nayok, Rayong, or Chanthaburi.

If overwhelming abundance is what you're after, head to Chanthaburi, Rayong or Chumphon. Together these three provinces grow nearly 90% of Thailand's durian, and there will be enormous piles and endless, oceanic warehouses of durian to ogle. Chanthaburi alone grows nearly 50% of the entire national yield.
To get a glimpse of Thai durian culture, head to the durian festivals in Chanthaburi, Sisaket, or Uttaradit. Sisaket, being part of the region known as the Isaan, is one of the more remote and traditional Thai provinces. It's a great place to really get away from the crowds.

If an island adventure with plenty of beach time is more your style, spend a few nights on Koh Chang or Koh Samui, two islands that grow durian in their mountainous interiors.

Thailand's unhybridized, wild seedling durian, known locally as thurian ban, grow throughout the country, but are most prevalent where durians grow unaided in the jungles and national parks, in particular Nakhon Si Thammarat. The bold and adventurous can go even further south to Yala or Narathiwat to seek the famed red-fleshed Durio gravoelens growing in the national parks.
Durian Festivals

The Thailand Tourism Authority organizes multiple durian festivals and general fruit festivals every year. Below is a list of some of the more well-known festivals, although most provinces probably organize a small gathering to celebrate the fruit harvest.

Dates are approximated. For this year’s dates, check the Festivals Page.

- **Chanthaburi World Durian Festival**: Mid-May to Early-June
- **Rayong Fruit Festival**: End of May to early June
- **Trat Fruit Festival**: End of May
- **Uttarakit Durian Festival**: June to July
- **Sisaket Durian Festival**: June to August
- **Kanchanaburi Fruit Festival**: Late June
- **Chumphon Durian Festival**: August
- **Surat Thani Rambutan and Other Fruit Festivals**: August
- **Yala Fruit Festival**: August
Jump to beginning of Introduction.
A Short History of Durian in Thailand

Despite dominating the international durian trade, Thailand is not the original home of durian. Durian probably originated in the single landmass that used to be Peninsular
Malaysia, Singapore, Sumatera, and Borneo. It’s assumed that durian slowly migrated north along the Thai-Malay Peninsula until it reached central Thailand, from where it spread to Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

The first recorded evidence of durian in Thailand was by the French diplomat Simon De La Loubere, who visited Bangkok in 1687 and stayed one year. He didn’t seem to be impressed with durian but, unlike most western explorers at that time, didn’t complain about the smell.

Back in the Frenchman’s day, the centers of durian cultivation were along the banks of the Chao Phraya River, the same river that runs through present-day Bangkok. Most of today’s popular durian varieties were developed in the carefully maintained gardens just across the river from modern-day Bangkok in Thonburi, including the famous varieties Monthong, Chanee, and Ganyao.

The centers of durian cultivation began shifting following two devastating floods in 1875 and 1942 that wiped out large portions of agricultural land in the Chao Phraya basin and encouraged farmers to sell out to urban developers. Since then, a series of floods have continued to diminish durian orchards in and around Bangkok with the most recent and possibly most damaging flood in 2011.

The building of highways in the 1950s and the 60s, at the same time as major flooding, allowed farmers in other provinces to begin selling durian to markets in Bangkok. News of the popular durian varieties spread by way of the fresh pavement, and soon farmers were chopping down their ancestral orchards and grafting the new, economically valued varieties onto the stumps. Since then the three main varieties have largely replaced local varieties in other regions and dominate the market.

Despite a renewed interest in saving the old varieties, most Thai people remain oblivious to the hundreds of durian varieties that grow in their own country. To taste these forgotten durians yourself, head to Ban Pasawan in Kanchanaburi, Suan La-Ong Fa in Nakhon Nayok, Suan Baan Rao in Rayong, or the Chanthaburi Horticultural Research Center in Chanthaburi. There are also booths set up at the Chanthaburi Durian Festival that offer bite-sized samples.
Traditional Durian Cuisine

Thai people love durian and have incorporated it into many traditional dishes. Here's a few ways you might also enjoy eating durian.

**Durian Chips (Thurian Tod).** Immature durian sliced thin and then deep-fried with salt. The taste and texture is similar to a potato chip but slightly sweeter. [Recipe here](#).

**Durian Sticky Cake/Jam (Thurian Guan).** Very ripe durian stirred over heat until it condenses into a thick, sticky paste or a soft, dense cake. It’s sometimes made with sugar, but is considered better without. Not for those who don’t already love durian as the flavor is often stronger than fresh durian. [Recipe here](#).

**Sugar-Boiled Durian (Thurian Chuam).** Medium ripe durian that is boiled in sugar water until it forms a sticky, gelatinous syrup. Served as a dessert.

**Durian Sticky Rice (Khao Niaow Thurian).** Many Thais profess this to be their favorite way to eat durian. Also known as glutinous rice, sticky rice takes on a soft, gelatinous texture once cooked. The rice is usually boiled in coconut milk and sugar and mixed with durian or a sweetened durian sauce. [Recipe here](#).

**Durian Curry (Thurian Massaman Curry).** A sweet and sour coconut-based sauce that usually includes chunks of potatoes, beef, and a sprinkling of peanuts. “Massaman” is not a Thai word and it is thought to be of Malay origin, brought to Thailand by the Muslim community. In the durian version, chunks of immature durian are subbed for potato.

**Pounded Durian Salad (Thurian Som Tam).** Pounded salad carts are ubiquitous across Thailand, but most don't include durian. They come in many different forms, and are an amalgam of grated vegetables and unripe fruits tossed together with garlic, chilies, lime juice, soy sauce, sugar, and fish oil and then smashed with a mortar and pestle. To get the durian version, head to Uttaradit's Laplae Durian Festival and attend the Durian Som Tam competition. [Recipe here](#).
**Durian Ice Cream (Itim Thurian).** Although in other countries like Indonesia, durian ice cream often has a coconut milk base, in Thailand it is usually made with whole milk. Look for it at any large supermarket or on street carts, particularly near schools. Don’t be surprised if the vendor uses an unconventional cone, like a hot dog bun! Recipe here.

**Look For Freeze-Dried Durian**

Freeze-drying, also called lyophilizing, is a new technology first introduced to Thailand by Sunshine Durian International. Chunks of ripe durian are placed in a vacuum and flash frozen by reducing the pressure and lowering the temperature to -60 F at the same time. The result is a bit like crispy Styrofoam that tastes just like durian. Pick it up at most supermarkets or at souvenir shops. Freeze dried durian is permitted on airplanes and makes a great travel day snack, although since it retains both the durian taste and odor, your neighbor might not be as appreciative as you.

See our tour of Sunshine’s durian processing factory.
Thailand’s Durian Varieties

Thai durians have been carefully cultivated for hundreds of years to appeal to a preference for a mild aroma and flavor. Thai durians are characteristically creamy or buttery, very sweet, and carry subtle hints of almond or vanilla. They are often firm, dry, and somewhat fibrous compared to the wetter, goopier texture typical of Malaysian or Indonesian durians.

It is believed that all of the durian varieties in Thailand originated from five ancient durians (Luang, Karaket, Tong Suk, Thong Yoi, and Gumpun) which then spawned the 234 other varieties now registered with the Thai government. Of those hundreds of durians, only three are now commonly found at fruit markets.

Of the three, Monthong is virtually the only variety currently exported abroad and by far dominates both orchard and market. A few other varieties do make it out of the country, mostly to Orko’s Fruit Company in France, but only in miniscule quantities. Monthong is also generally preferred by the new generation of Thai durian lovers for its thick, voluptuous flesh, rich creaminess, and mild, milky sweetness. Older folks tend to have a soft spot for Chanee, a durian with bright yellow flesh that is both more pungent and bitter. Those with sophisticated tastes typically choose Ganyao, a hefty durian that is so sweet and dense it has been compared to vanilla pound cake.

The other durian varieties are still around, most notably Kop, Nockyib, and Puangmanee. The greatest diversity of durian varieties can be found at the Chanthaburi Horticultural Research Center, Suan La-Ong-Fah, Ban Pasawan in Kanchanaburi, or Suan Ban Rao in Rayong. You can view a complete list of all 234 Thai durian varieties at Year of the Durian.

You can also find the unnamed durian grown from seed, Thurian ban, or backyard durian, growing in backyards and forested areas. Some of these trees are quite old, up to 200 years, and are currently cared for by the great, great, great grandchildren of the original owner.

If you're lucky and motivated, you might find a completely different durian species. All cultivated durian belongs to one species (Durio zibethinus), but at least four species of durian grow wild in Thailand’s southern jungles. Go for a hunt and see what you find!
Durian Field Guide

Different varieties can be identified from the exterior by their shape, color, stem length, or thorn characteristics. Some thorns are long and sharp, wide and blunt, or nubby and needle-like. Typically, Thai durians are both larger in size and have wider, blunter spikes than those in other countries. They also have a thinner outer shell, making them easier to open. This is a bonus for the durian industry, but a possible downside for those fanatics for whom the effort of getting the durian open is half the fun.

Here is a field guide for identifying some of the more well-known varieties and the four native species found in Thailand.
Monthong
(Mon Thong, Mornthong)

About: Monthong is the most common durian variety in Thailand and the only durian currently being commercially exported.

Translation: Golden Pillow.

Size: A large durian averaging around 3–5 kilograms, but it’s not unheard of to have fruits as large as 12 kilograms.

Inside: The flesh is typically pale yellow or cream color. It is an extremely mild and sweet tasting durian with plump, fleshy pods that can have a flesh-to-seed ratio as large as 30%.

Outside: Each of the fruit containing sections is pronounced, but often lopsided or misshapen. The large spikes are brown with a bright green base.

Price Peak: 40 baht/kilo Average: 60 baht Out of season: more than 200 baht/kilo.

Days From Flower to Harvest: 120–135
Chanee
(Chani, Kani)

About: Chanee was the first commercial durian variety to gain popularity and remains a favorite of the old folks.

Translation: Gibbon.

Size: A large durian weighing 2–3 kilos on average.

Inside: The flesh is typically dark yellow or even slightly orange. It is considered one of the more bitter durians, although some people complain that it can have a metallic bite if picked too early. This durian is pungent and many people experience "chanee burps" long after the fruit should have been digested. Not necessarily a bad thing.

Outside: Chanee is identifiable by its somewhat dusky or dark green/purple color, oblong pear shape, and unusually large, blocky spikes.

Price Peak: 30 baht/kilo, Average: 40 baht, Out of season: not available.

Days from Flower to Harvest: 90–100.
Ganyao
(Kanyao, Ganja)

About: Ganyao is the most expensive of the Thai durians. It is sometimes jokingly called “ganja” in comparison to food spiked with marijuana because of its addicting qualities. Many consider it the best durian variety in Thailand.

Translation: Long Stem.

Size: Typically a medium to large durian weighing 2–3 kg.

Inside: The flesh is yellow, very dry, thick and smooth, comparable to a rich frosting or moist cake.

Outside: Ganyao is identifiable by its perfectly round, pumpkin shape and extremely long stem, which is sometimes wrapped in banana leaves to prevent damage.

Price Peak: 100 baht/kilo, although very special fruits grown in the Nonthaburi province can go for as much as 10,000 baht per fruit. Average: 200 baht/kilo, Out of season: not available.

Days From Flower to Harvest: 120–135.
**Kradumthong**  
(Gadum or Kradum)

**About:** Kradum ripens earlier than most other durians and is common in early May. It may sometimes have six locules instead of just the usual five.

**Translation:** Golden Button.

**Size:** A medium durian 1.5–3 kg.

**Inside:** The beautiful golden yellow flesh is typically very sweet and mild.

**Outside:** A round durian with green skin and short dense thorns. It is identifiable by its pronounced locules, flat bottom, and squat, pumpkin shape. Six locules are not uncommon, and from the top it looks like a five or six petal flower. Occasionally the dried, brown stamen from the flower will still be attached at the bottom.

**Price Peak:** 40 baht/kilo, **Average:** 60 baht/kilo, **Out of Season:** Not available.

**Days from Flower to Harvest:** 90–100.
Puангmanee  
(Pongmanee, Puang Manee, Phung Manee)

**About:** A variety local to Chanthaburi province that is gaining popularity in other regions.

**Translation:** Manee’s Flower Clusters. Puangmanee flowers in clusters or bunches. “Puang” means bunch, and Manee is the wife of the man who discovered this excellent durian.

**Size:** A small durian that rarely weighs more than 1.5 kg.

**Inside:** Deep yellow to orange flesh with a smooth, chocolatey sensation. It is one of the stronger tasting durians and a personal favorite.

**Outside:** A small deep green durian with dense, very sharp thorns and a faint pale brown star on the bottom marking the seams. The shape is usually similar to a pear.

**Price Peak:** 60 baht/kilo, **Average:** 100 baht/kilo, **Out of Season:** Not available.

**Days From Flower to Harvest:** 100–110.
**Kop**  
(Gop, Gob, Kob)

**About:** Kop actually refers to a family of durian varieties that share a genetic background and are relatively similar. Kop was once one of the more popular durians in Thailand, but has fallen out of favor. Surprisingly, it is more common in the Philippines than in Thailand.

**Translation:** Frog.

**Size:** Often an extremely large durian, but varies widely.

**Inside:** Typically pale in color ranging from grey-white to cream. Often the bottom end of the durian is solid shell, making it difficult to open.

**Outside:** Tends to be heart-shaped or with an extended point. The locules are very pronounced, with large blocky spikes. At the top, around the stem, the spikes tend to cross over each other and point in strange directions. This durian seems to yellow faster than other durians.

**Price:** Averages 30 baht/kilo.

**Days From Flower to Harvest:** Depends on specific variety, typically around 110.
Longlaplae

**Translation:** Named in honor of Mrs. Long Upala, who entered the fruit of a durian tree growing in her yard into a regional competition in 1973. The name is a combination of her first name and the district where she lived, Laplae. The original tree can still be found growing in Laplae district.

**Size:** A small durian that rarely weighs more than 1.5 kg.

**Inside:** A very pale aril with a milky, sweet flavor and scarcely any smell.

**Outside:** Well-formed with a flat bottom. Spines are typically green with light brown tips.

**Price Peak:** 60 baht/kilo, **Average:** 100 baht/kilo, **Out of Season:** Not available.

**Days From Flower to Harvest** 105–110.
**Linlaplae**

**Translation:** The name honors Mr. Lin Panland, who discovered a tree that produced unusually tasty durian in his front yard in 1974. The name is a combination of his first name and the district where he lived, Laplae.

**Size:** A very small durian that rarely weighs more than 1 kg.

**Inside:** Pale white or cream. Typically seedless or with only small, thin seed remnants.

**Outside:** A deep green durian that is easily recognizable by its elongated or “skinny” shape and severely protruding locules. From the top, Linlaplae looks like a five petaled flower.

**Price Peak:** 60 baht/kilo, **Average:** 100 baht/kilo, **Out of Season:** Not available

**Days from flower to harvest:** 110–115.

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**Other Durian Species**

All of the durians in this book so far belong to one species, *Durio zibethinus*. A number of other species can be found in Thailand as well. Most sources count only five in total, including *D. zibethinus*, but there are probably far more. Unfortunately, few Thai researchers have made the effort to explore the native Durio species of their forests and jungles and information remains scant.

Many species have been documented just on the other side of the border in Malaysia, and since durian trees aren’t bound by national borders, it stands to reason that many
might be found in Thailand as well. Research groups have reported finding *Durio pinangianus* in Phang-Nga and *Durio macrophyllus* in Yala, but these findings are difficult to confirm.

Of the four species confirmed to be native to Thailand, only two are considered delicious. We’re including the others for the truly obsessed among you who get a kick from a little durian trivia.

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***Durio graveolens***

**About:** This delicious red- or yellow-fleshed durian is common in Borneo, and unheard of in Thailand and Malaysia despite the fact that it grows in the jungles there, too. Less sweet and far creamier than a normal durian, *graveolens* has a pasty texture. It’s Rob’s favorite durian.

**Thai name:** *thurian lakkha.*

**Distribution:** Yala.

[Read more](#)
**Durio lowianus**

**About:** This durian is said to taste similar to a *thurian ban*. The aril runs the gamut from a nice yellow color to a dull white, thick and pretty firm like the texture of a dense cake. As of writing, we have not yet tasted this durian. It’s one more for the hunt.

**Thai Name:** *thurian don, charian, thurian nok, karian.*

**Distribution:** Ranong, Trang, and national parks of Southern Thailand.

[Read more](#)
**Durio griffithi**

**About:** A tiny heart-shaped durian with a bright red exterior. The flesh is thin, waxy, and virtually tasteless, but is popular among birds.

**Thai names:** Thurian nok

**Distribution:** Trang and Yala  

[Read more.](#)
Durio mansoni

**About:** The edibility of this durian is questionable. Early explorers wrote of “big succulent arils,” but the ones we found in Chanthaburi had only a thin, dry white skin of flesh surrounding the seed.

**Thai names:** Chakarian, thurian pa, thurian thuean.

**Distribution:** Chanthaburi, Ranong, Phangna, and Burma.

[Read more](#).

**Durian Production Areas**

The Thai Agricultural Department keeps records of durian production in 29 provinces. The rest grow so little durian that records aren't of economic value, or of value to you if you're traveling for durian. You can still purchase durian at the main wet markets, but it will have been brought by truck from the regions that grow durian. Note that north of Phrae, durian doesn’t grow at all. It’s too cold.

Use this map to help coordinate your durian interests with other goals for travel in Thailand.
If your only focus is durian, head to one of the areas highlighted in dark orange, like Chanthaburi, Rayong, or Chumphon. This group produces significantly more durian than the rest of the country combined. Chanthaburi Province should almost be in its own category. At more than 200,000 tonnes per year, Chanthaburi produces more durian than Rayong and Chumphon combined.

If you have other interests in mind, but want to ensure there’s plenty of durian around, stick to any of the other highlighted provinces and use the chart in the next section to figure out when is the right time to go.
For curiosity’s sake, the statistics for each province’s yield in the year 2013 are provided at the end of this book.

Durian Season Guide

Planning a trip for durian season is tricky business. Because Durian season is tied to the weather, an especially wet or dry year can seriously effect when and how durians ripen.

That’s why the official dates of durian festivals are never set until a few weeks or a month beforehand, which can be aggravating if you’re flying half-way around the world in hopes of attending.

Luckily the durian season does occur within a fairly reliable window. If your only goal is to eat as much durian as you can, travel at any time within the highlighted areas of the fruiting schedule below and you’re likely to find more than enough to have a serious pig out.
If you’re after a specific variety, you’ll need to consider whether or not that particular durian fruits at the beginning, middle, or end of the season and plan your trip accordingly.

For example, if you go on a durian hunt in Bangkok in April, you’re likely to find mostly Chanee and Kradumthong, which need only 90–100 days to mature from flower to tasty fruit.

Favorites like Monthong and Ganyao need more time to ripen on the tree, a trait that many people believe creates a superior fruit. However, you’re still likely to see them at odd times of the year. They’re in such high demand that farmers go to great lengths to get them to fruit early, sometimes using chemical stimulants to get ahead. These durians are known as *thurian san*, or chemical durian. Durians grown on the off-season
will be more expensive and of dubious quality, so wait until late May or June to get the best deals and the best quality on Ganyao and Monthong.

Note that some sources consider Monthong and Ganyao to be mid-season durians rather than late season because there are durian varieties that take even longer to mature. A few of the old, nearly forgotten varieties like Gumpun and Enak need more than 140 days, but they’re so rare you’re unlikely to find them unless you already know where to look or have purchased this guide.

Even if you’re traveling on the off-season you’re still likely to find fresh durian in supermarkets, high-end fruit stalls, and in Bangkok’s Chinatown. Thanks to the alternating seasons of Thailand’s durian growing regions and modern technology, durian is now available nearly all year round. It will be more expensive and of dubious quality, but available to satisfy the craving.

Jump to beginning of Durian Basics.
Budgeting For Durian

Durian is a relatively expensive habit, even in Thailand. While you may have heard stories about $1 or even 50-cent durians, the truth is that these super-cheap durians probably weren’t purchased in Thailand. The cost for a durian commonly sold in the market ranges from as cheap as 20 baht/kilo ($0.62 USD) to more than 200 baht/kilo ($6.20 USD). Just how much depends on where, when and what kind of durian you want to buy.

If Ganyao is your favorite durian, plan on bringing some extra cash. The most expensive of durian varieties, Ganyao rarely dips below 100 baht/kilo ($3) even at peak season. As
long as you’re not planning on living off of Ganyao the prices for durian aren’t terrible, but those of you traveling with low funds and big stomachs are still going to want to factor your daily durian allowance into your budget.

To help you do that, below are some average price ranges for the durian tourist’s typical daily needs and activities in Thailand. The high-end prices are more typical of places like Bangkok, Phuket and the islands.

How much your trip ultimately costs is up to you and your travel style.

The most expensive durian in the world costs more than 10,000 baht (~$300 USD) per fruit.

A 2-kg Monthong durian: 100–300 baht ($3–9.23 USD)
A 2-kg Chanee durian: 40–160 baht ($1.23–4.90 USD)
A post-durian coconut: 15–40 baht ($0.83–1.23 USD)
A vegetarian meal: 40–60 baht ($1.30–1.84 USD)
A budget hotel room: 150–600 baht ($4.60–18.45)
A 3-hour bus ride: 150–200 baht ($4.60–6.15 USD)
A plane ticket inside Thailand: 1500 baht ($50 USD)
Durian Etiquette

**Buying:** Durians are sold at wet markets or by roving street vendors who set up along the sidewalks. During the season, you can almost always find durian at any of the evening food markets too. They’re usually sold by the kilogram.

When you express interest in buying a durian, the vendor will begin tapping the durians with a rubber tipped stick to listen for the correct sound. In our experience, they typically shoot for less ripe than we want so we always check the durian ourselves as well using our tips in the following section, Selecting the Perfect Durian. Sometimes it’s just a matter of communicating your preference for ripeness. Once the vendor understands what you want, the riper stuff will suddenly materialize from under tables or behind piles. [Jump to Useful Words and Phrases.](#)

When a durian is selected, the vendor will cut a triangle-shaped window out of the shell so you can see and touch the flesh of the durian. Unlike in Indonesia or Malaysia, you cannot taste the durian. Poke one finger through the window and test how soft the flesh is. If it is not to your liking, feel free to reject the durian and try another one. The vendor will simply plug the hole back up and sell it to someone else.
It's very common for vendors to cut up and package the durian for you so that you don't have to deal with the unwieldy shell. Often the vendor will wrap each locule in a piece of wax paper and place them all in a plastic bag. Another common take-away style is a Styrofoam box. If you wish to experience the joy of opening the durian yourself, just indicate that you want to take it away using some of the vocab words provided. The vendor will either tie a string around the durian or place it in a bag with newspaper to make carrying easier.

**Eating:** Unlike in Malaysia and the Philippines, it is not customary to consume durian on site. Thailand has no concept of the all-you-can-eat durian buffet, and durian stalls will almost never have designated tables and chairs for you to eat at. It is expected that you will carry your durian away and eat it at home like a civilized person.

If you do wish to eat it at the durian stall (so as to buy more as needed) low chairs and a table can usually be procured. In our experience, vendors also don't mind if you squat in front of their stall or sit on a nearby curb. But be aware that you'll be a spectacle.

Many Thais use a plastic bag or gloves to eat their durian so as not to sully their fingers. If you've been eating durian sans-gloves, remember to wash your hands afterward. Do not shake hands if you have stinky durian fingers. This is considered fairly bad manners.

**Cleaning Up:** Make sure to pick up your durian shells and put them in a garbage bin or trash basket. Don't leave them on the beach, in park bushes, or in someone's yard, even if it appears to be mostly or completely overtaken by jungle. People may be offended.

Lastly, durians are banned on most forms of public transit and in hotel rooms. While it's fun to skirt the rules, be polite to other guests. The odor can really bother some people.

**Watch Out**
When cutting the viewing window, vendors often cut at the bottom of the durian rather than at the top (near the stem). Since durians ripen from the bottom up, this means that a durian that seems perfectly ripe on the bottom may still be hard and crunchy on the top.
Selecting The Perfect Durian

In Thailand, most durians are picked underripe and then kept for some days in storage to soften. They may or may not be treated with an artificial ripening agent, which is usually visible in the form of a yellow stain somewhere on the stem.

People in Thailand like their durian at various levels of ripeness, depending on personal preference. Some like it crunchy as an apple or soft as caramel custard. Most Thai people prefer durian somewhere in the middle—with a crisp exterior and a creamy soft interior. Use the vocabulary words in Useful Thai Words and Phrases to explain to the vendor how you want it.

You can tell at a glance how ripe the durians being sold are by looking at the stem. When durians are harvested, they are twisted or clipped off at the point where the stem attaches to the branch. Somewhere in the middle of the stem is a joint where the durian would naturally break off when ripe. Botanically it is called the abscission point.
The stem of all durians, even those picked underripe, will break off at this point when ripe. By wiggling the stem above the joint with one finger you can test how loosely
attached the stem over the joint is and approximate how long until the durian will be ripe.

A glance at the stem will also indicate how long the durian has been off the tree, and sometimes how underripe it was picked. Stems should look fresh and full, and expose a pale green or white color when chipped with a fingernail. Stems that are dry, dark brown, or shriveled have been off the tree a long time. If the stem is old and the durian still looks green, it was probably picked far too young and will never ripen properly.

Beware of very yellow durians or durians that have split along the seams and opened. These can taste okay, but have most likely been sitting around off-tree for too long and will not be flavorful.

Read a More In-Depth Guide.

**Steps to Choosing a Ripe Durian**

1. Test the abscission point.
2. Look at the color. Dusty brown or brown intermixed with green is perfect.
3. Smell for that wonderful aroma.
4. Shake to listen for loose seeds.
5. Compare the weight to other equally-sized durians. A ripe durian should feel surprisingly light when compared to an equally sized underripe durian.
6. Poke the durian flesh through a window cut in the shell.
7. Buy and enjoy!

**Useful Words and Phrases**

Most people in Thailand speak little, if any, English. They love it when we speak Thai! Try out your language skills and communicate with your durian vendor to get the durian you want.

Remember that in Thai, the personal pronoun "I" changes depending on whether the speaker is male or female. Women should refer to themselves as Chan while men should say Pom. In the same way, to denote respect women can add Ka to the end of phrases while men can add Krop. For example, Lindsay says “Sa-was-dee-ka!” and Rob says “Sa-was-dee-krop!”

**Note:** Because all translations from Thai to English are phonetic, there are multiple ways to spell durian in Thai. We’ve seen thurain, thurean, turian, and thulian. We find that Thai people are more likely to understand us when we use an “el” sound versus an “r” sound, as in thulian. It’s really a cross somewhere between the two sounds, but we’ve never managed to hear the difference.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Thai Phonetic</th>
<th>Thai Script</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hello</td>
<td>Sa-was-dee (ka/krop)</td>
<td>สวัสดี</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>Garuna / Chuay</td>
<td>กรุณา / ขอ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank-you</td>
<td>Khob kun (ka/krop)</td>
<td>ขอบคุณ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse me (polite)</td>
<td>Khor tod</td>
<td>ขอโทษด้วย / ขอโทษครับ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like durian</td>
<td>(I) chob thurian</td>
<td>น้ำช่อมดุเรียน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm a vegetarian</td>
<td>(I) pen mang savirat</td>
<td>น้ำเป็นมังสวิรัติ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your durian is very</td>
<td>Thurian khong khun</td>
<td>ทุเรียนของคุณอร่อยจังเลย</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>aroi jung loei</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very delicious</td>
<td>A roi mak</td>
<td>อร่อยมาก</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Thai Phonetic</td>
<td>Thai Script</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durian</td>
<td>Thurian</td>
<td>ทุเรียน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>เม็ด</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durian Flesh</td>
<td>Neuua</td>
<td>เมือ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locule</td>
<td>Poo</td>
<td>ปุ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem</td>
<td>Khuaa pon</td>
<td>ข้างผด</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durian Thorn</td>
<td>Hnaam thurian</td>
<td>ห内马尔ิันทิริอน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durian Shell</td>
<td>Pleuuk thurian</td>
<td>ปีลึกทิริอน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet durian</td>
<td>Turian nee wan</td>
<td>ทุเรียนนี้หวาน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitter durian</td>
<td>Turian nee khom</td>
<td>ทุเรียนนี้เขม</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Lueang</td>
<td>เหลือง</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pale</td>
<td>Seet</td>
<td>ซีต</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ripe</td>
<td>Suk</td>
<td>สุก</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very ripe</td>
<td>Ngom</td>
<td>จอม</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too ripe/overripe</td>
<td>Thuen thuek</td>
<td>ทิณทิค</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft</td>
<td>Nim</td>
<td>นิม</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-soft</td>
<td>Mai suk mag</td>
<td>ไม่มีสุกมาก</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard, crunchy</td>
<td>Khaeng</td>
<td>เจิง</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barely ripe</td>
<td>Phueng suk</td>
<td>เผิงสุก</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Finding Durian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Thai Phonetic</th>
<th>Thai Script</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Market</td>
<td>Talad ponlamai</td>
<td>ตลาดพลําไม้</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm/Orchard</td>
<td>Suan</td>
<td>สวน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the farm?</td>
<td>Suan u tee nai?</td>
<td>สวนอยู่ที่ไหน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the fruit market?</td>
<td>Talad pon la mai u tee nai?</td>
<td>ตลาดผลไม้อยู่ที่ไหน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am looking for durian</td>
<td>(I) gum lung mong ha thurian</td>
<td>ช้นก้าดังม่อนหาทุเรียน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to eat durian</td>
<td>(I) thong gan ja gin turian</td>
<td>ช้นต้องการจะกินทุเรียน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How far to the durian?</td>
<td>Turian khae nai?</td>
<td>แค่ไหน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you take me to durian, please?</td>
<td>Chuay phaa (I) pai sohng thee turian?</td>
<td>อยากพาฉันไปส่ง-ที่ทุเรียน</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buying Durian</strong></td>
<td><strong>Thai Phonetic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Thai Script</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td><strong>Thai Phonetic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Thai Script</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What varieties of durian do you sell?</td>
<td>Thurian tee kun khai yu mee pan arai bang?</td>
<td>ทูเรียนที่คุณขายอยู่มีพันธุ์อะไรบ้าง</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have Chanee (Monthong, etc.)?</td>
<td>Khun mee Chanee mai?</td>
<td>คุณมีชานีไหมหมดกอง? ละแวก?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much for these durians?</td>
<td>Khun mee Monthong mai?</td>
<td>ทูเรียนเนื้อของอย่างไร</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much is it?</td>
<td>Thurian nee khai yung ngai?</td>
<td>ราคาเท่าไหร่</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you reduce the price?</td>
<td>Raka tao rai?</td>
<td>ลดให้หน่อยได้ไหม</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want a very ripe durian</td>
<td>Lod hai noi dai mai? (I) thonggan thurian ngom ngom</td>
<td>ต้นสั่งการทูเรียนงอมๆ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want a sweet durian</td>
<td>(I) thong gan thurian nee wan</td>
<td>ต้นสั่งการทูเรียนงอมๆ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want a bitter durian</td>
<td>(I) thong gan thurian nee khom</td>
<td>ต้นสั่งการทูเรียนงอมๆ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long that I keep this durian?</td>
<td>Geb wai dai nan mai?</td>
<td>เก็บไว้ได้นานไหม</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When should I eat this durian?</td>
<td>Muea rai ja gin dai?</td>
<td>เมื่อไหร่จะกินได้</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durian for take-away</td>
<td>Gap khaao thoong</td>
<td>ถ้าเข้าจุง</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this durian organic?</td>
<td>Nee pen thurian plod sarn pimai</td>
<td>นี่เป็นทูเรียนปลอดสารพิษไหม</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical-free durian</td>
<td>Thurian rai san</td>
<td>ทูเรียนไร้สิ่งส่งเสริมโรค</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Health, Safety, and Pesticides

**Basic Safety** It’s not a myth that people die every year in durian related accidents. Durians are heavy, they’re sharp, and if they fall on you, chances are you’re not going to be happy.

Avoid orchards on windy days, wear protective shoe covering if playing durian kickball with a friend, and take care when carrying durians home in plastic bags or on strings or you may look like you own a cat who uses your legs as scratching posts. If transporting your durian via motorcycle, make sure all the durians are appropriately stowed and are not likely to fall on you in the event of an accident.

It’s also worth noting that those with high blood pressure or heart arrhythmia may want to take it easy on durian. Durian is high in tyramine and possibly other substances that can temporarily elevate blood pressure, leading to heart palpitations and discomfort in those with prior conditions.

For examples of those who met their end because of durian, check out [When Durian Really Does Kill People](#).
**Pesticides** The dark side to any commercial fruit orchard is the chemicals. No matter where you are in the world, unless you're buying 100% organic produce, the chances are pretty good that you're ingesting trace amounts of something nasty. When traveling to a foreign country with a reputation for poorly regulated pesticide use, like Thailand, there's reason for concern.

Thailand is currently one of the most developed countries in Southeast Asia. The country grows and exports a larger volume of fruit than its neighbors because each step in the farm-to-factory chain has been modernized, organized, and chemicalized. That bounty comes with a price. Thailand now struggles with polluted watersheds and rivers, soil erosion, and deforestation, as well as public health concerns such as air, water, and food contamination. Cancer is a leading cause of death.

The good news is that the Thai government is cracking down on unregulated chemical use and trying to educate farmers about how and when to apply chemicals through a certification program called Good Agricultural Practice (GAP). Most small durian growers now recognize that spraying chemicals is a health hazard and are returning to the traditional polyculture farm with mangosteen, rambutan, longkong, and durian intermixed.

That doesn’t mean that they’ve stopped spraying—just that they’re trying to cut back or avoid the most toxic chemicals. To really know how the durian was grown, you need to talk to the farmer.

That’s why going to the farm is key to getting the best quality durian. The durian you buy on a small farm has typically received fewer rounds of pesticides. It will have been picked closer to being fully ripe, and skipped all the chemical treatment given by middlemen to control the rate of ripening. Not only will it be healthier, it will taste better, too.

Unfortunately, we can’t always buy durian fresh from the farm, so here are some things about the durian growing process to be aware of when purchasing durians in Thailand.
Chemicals are applied to durian in four different situations.

1. As chemical fertilizers
2. As stimulants that control flowering and tree growth
3. As pesticides to kill insects, fungi, and bacterial infections
4. As post-harvest ripening agents

**Fertilizer:** If you're highly sensitive to chemicals, inorganic fertilizers are the least of your worries. Most are simple concoctions of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium with trace minerals to help the plant grow, usually derived from mined ore or industrial wastes. They're essentially a multivitamin for plants. Long term, applying inorganic or petro-chemical fertilizers doesn't really replenish the soil and can ultimately weaken the plant, but there's no reason to fear consuming the fruit.

**Stimulants:** Some chemicals stimulate and control the life cycle of the durian tree, such as when it flowers, fruits, or puts out new leaves. There are a few chemicals that do this, but the one currently getting the most attention is paclobutrazol because it can cause durians to fruit outside of the normal fruiting season. It means that durians can
now be harvested nearly all year round, a double boon for farmers since durians sold out of season fetch a much higher price.

Paclobutrazol is a plant growth hormone typically added to irrigation, applied as a foliar spray, or occasionally injected directly into the tree trunk. Its effect on human health isn't really clear. The USA bans its use on everything except ornamental plants, but it's commonly used on apples in the UK, citrus in the European Union, and mangoes in Australia. As scary as a growth regulator might sound, paclobutrazol is nothing unfamiliar to anyone who already eats fruit.

Nevertheless, it’s probably a good idea to avoid buying out-of-season durian as using paclobutrazol tends to weaken the tree and leads to increased pesticide use. Refer to the Season Guide to find out when it’s durian season or talk to the durian vendor. Durian grown out of season is referred to as thurian san, or chemical durian.

**Pesticides:** Pesticides are the scariest class of chemical used on durian, in part because of lax regulation and enforcement and common misuse. In toxicity to humans they run the gamut from benign to mildly irritating to deadly.

Thankfully with durian, the thick inedible outer shell decreases the likelihood of actually consuming significant pesticide residue, but it's a good idea to be cautious. If you are very sensitive you may want to avoid markets altogether and source your durian directly from reputable farmers.

Below is a list of the chemicals most commonly used on durian and a chart of maximum pesticide residue allowed that is published by Thailand's National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards.
**Abamectin.** An insecticide used in common household products to kill mites and ants, in particular fire ants. It’s sometimes approved for “organic” programs because the chemical is a natural by-product of the soil microorganism *Streptomyces avermitilis*. Brand names: Varsity, Clench, Advance Carpenter, Ant Bait, Avid Insecticide.

**Carbaryl.** Commonly used in general insecticides for use in the home and garden. In the USA alone, more than 300 EPA approved products contain carbaryl, mostly general insecticides like Sevin, Adios, Carbamec, and Slam.

**Chlorpyrifos.** An insecticide sometimes used to control fire ants, mosquitoes, and bed bugs. It received media attention in 2011 and 2012 when it was linked to the deaths of several tourists staying in hotels that used it as an insecticide.\(^{14}\) It is currently illegal in the United Kingdom, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany, and is no longer approved for household use in the USA, although it may still be applied to more than 100 crops. In other countries it is sold under brand names Dursban, Lorsban, or Renoban.

**Cypermethrin.** An insecticide common in several household products used to kill cockroaches and termites. Popular brands include Raid, Ammo, Cybush, Cynoff, Cyperkill, and Demon.

**Dicrotophos.** A controversial insecticide used for controlling mites. It is sold under the brand names Bidrin, Carbicron, Diapadrin, Dicron, and Ektafos. In the USA, it is not approved for household use and is only used for cotton. It is illegal in California. As of 2012, Thailand was considering banning this insecticide.
**Glyphosate.** A controversial herbicide commonly used to control grass or weeds both in the home and commercially. It is sold under the brand Round Up. It is widely used all over the world.

**Metalaxyl.** A fungicide used to prevent and treat root rot, canker, or other fungus infestations. In durian, it is a popular treatment for the fungus *phytophthora palmivora*. It is sold under the brands Apron, Ridomyl, Delta-Coat, and Subdue.

**Methamidophos.** An insecticide commonly used in commercial farming. In the USA it is not approved for household use. Brands include: Monitor, Tamaron, Filitox, Tamanox, Tarn, Patrole, Metamidofos Estrella; Methamidophos 60 WSC: Methedrin 60; Morithion; Red Star Alloran, Nitofol, Tamaron, Swipe, Nuratron, Vetaron, SRA 5172, and Tam.

**Propargite.** An insecticide primarily used to control mites. It is used in the USA on a variety of crops, but is not approved for home use. It is sold under the brand names Omite and Comite.

**Sulfur.** A periodic element that has been used as a fungicide for more than 2,000 years. It is approved for both home and commercial use and is commonly used in organic farming.

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**Ripening Agents:** Once harvested, durians get one last chemical touch up. In Thailand, durians are typically harvested early and allowed to ripen off the tree for several days before consumption, usually with the aid of the ripening agent Ethephon. Ethephon is the yellow colored powder or paint sometimes visible on the stems of durian. In the United States, direct application of Ethephon to food is not permitted, but it can be used to release the gas ethylene, which is then used to ripen fruit.

Ethephon is often mixed with a fungicide and sometimes another plant growth inhibitor, gibberellic acid, to keep the durians from splitting open at the market.

This chemical cocktail is the last application for durians heading abroad as well.
What about the exported ones? We have many health-conscious friends in America, Australia, and the UK who refuse to buy imported Thai durians because they worry about chemicals applied during the export and import process.

The truth is that whether or not eating durian in Thailand is safer than eating durian in your home country depends on the company you buy your durian from and how conscious you are of where you buy durian when traveling in Thailand. All durians, no matter whether for export or not, are treated with a combination of ethephon to control ripening and fungicide. If they are being exported fresh, not frozen, they are probably treated with additional fungicides and then whatever treatment is required by the particular country’s import laws.

Frozen durians do not receive further treatment once they leave Thailand and are never irradiated or dipped in any further chemicals.

If it makes you feel any better, none of the chemicals listed above are currently banned in the United States of America, although a few are heavily regulated and are not permitted for household use. For more information on toxicity and exposure, go to the National Pesticide Information website or Beyond Pesticides.

If you’re still worried, see our tour of a durian export factory.

The Truth About Organic Durian

Organic foods are a new fad in Thailand. Every durian farmer we met was aware that being organic was a positive thing, but weren’t always clear about what growing organically really means.

The confusion isn’t helped by Thailand’s food labeling system, which includes multiple tiers of pesticide-regulated food. Some simply promise to test that pesticide residue on the produce is within the acceptable range, others regulate which types of chemicals, how often, and how soon before harvesting the fruit was sprayed.

A 2012 study reported that truly organic produce was limited to less than 0.02% of total agricultural land. So most food grown in Thailand falls somewhere within the Safe Foods category.

It’s the same for durian. We found on our travels that the majority of “organic” durian in Thailand could be better classified as “No-spray” or "natural" durian (thurian thammachat) as opposed to “no chemical durian” (thurian rai san). While many farmers consciously choose to use traditional, home-brewed fertilizers and pest remedies, many supplement with chemical fertilizers and use copious Roundup to control the weeds.

For more information about organic food in Thailand, see Being Green.

Jump to beginning of Durian Practicalities.
Thailand Travel Tips

Getting There

Getting Around

Finding A Place To Stay

Being Green

Our Favorite Travel Resources

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Getting There

Getting around in Thailand is as easy as it gets when traveling in Southeast Asia. Buses are typically air-conditioned, run on published schedules, and stop only at established stations along the way. Trains are slow and often run late, but reliably so. Locals are usually willing to help the bewildered tourist. As a bonus, most forms of transport are really cheap. Here’s a brief look at your choices for getting around in Thailand.

**Flights** are a great way to get around if you are short on time. Most large cities have an airport serving domestic carriers, and flights within Thailand are surprisingly cheap.
**Buses or Mini Vans** typically service different stations, so you need to know which you want so you can go to the right station. Vans will often be slightly more expensive than a bus, because they stop less frequently and are faster. They can also be more cramped for space and a bit of a wild ride, depending on how impatient your driver is.

There are three classes of bus. First class has a toilet onboard and is air-conditioned, second has air-conditioning, and third has no toilet and no AC and stops to pick up everybody. Except in very rural areas, you will need to actually go to a station to catch one of these—they won’t stop at random to pick up possible customers along the roadsides.

Strangely, most bus stations in Thailand have a Facebook page.

**Trains** in Thailand are a comfortable, if slow, way to get around. They’re best for covering very long distances when overnight is necessary, and are reasonably priced. Sleeper cars come in first and second class, the difference being air-conditioning. Air-conditioned cars are famous for frigid nights and nightmares that you’ve left the tropics for the South Pole. Second class sleepers, being cheaper and generally more comfortable, are the most popular with tourists, so remember to book early. You can book online at the [official government website](https://www.transportation.gov.th), but we’ve found it difficult to use. We tend to use [thailandbytrain.com](http://thailandbytrain.com), and then purchase our tickets at the nearest station.
Getting Around

Within any large city transportation is easy. Bangkok has a great metro system and intelligible citywide bus system. There are organized motorcycle taxi unions everywhere, usually identifiable by the clusters of men wearing matching vests lounging around their motorbikes.

The problem is that most durian orchards are not located near large cities. Here are some options for traversing regions outside of Bangkok.

**Motorcycle taxis** are by far the cheapest way to get from A to B. Motorcycle taxis are the most common form of private transportation and can be found almost anywhere, unless you are in a really rural area. You’ll need to haggle to get a fair price, but that’s usually fairly easy.

**Songthaew** literally means *two rows* in Thai, and is a pickup truck with two long benches installed along the bed. These are the cheapest form of local transportation, but you need to have a good idea of where you are going or be able to speak a decent amount of Thai.

**Tuk-tuks** are covered three-wheeled motorbikes with a bench across the back. There are typically no doors or windows. Tuk-tuks are more expensive than motorcycle taxis, and in my experience are more expensive then the metered taxis.

**Taxis** come in various cheerful shades. Most noticeable are the cotton-candy pink taxis, but just as common are the green and yellow cabs, the color of which indicates they are owned by individuals rather than a company. By law, taxis are metered, but outside of large cities it's more common to haggle over price per ride before getting in the cab.

**Hitchhiking** is possible and sometimes necessary if you happen to be stranded in a very rural area where public transportation doesn’t exist. In our experience, Thai people either recognize the thumbs-up symbol or that there are two Westerners standing on the side of the road looking lost. Either way, it works. Typically our offer of baht is refused, so we just smile and say a big “Khap-khun!”

Navigating in Thailand

Addresses in Thailand can be somewhat confusing. Here are a few insights to help you navigate.

Houses are numbered in chronological order of when they were built, rather than location. Therefore the house number doesn’t mean very much in terms of navigation.

Each province, capital city, and district surrounding the city, have the same name. They are distinguished by a descriptor word placed in front of the name. For example, Changwat Chanthaburi is the province, Amphoe Chanthaburi is the district,
and Mueang Chanthaburi is the city.

   A Tambon is a sub-district.

   Small towns or villages are assigned both names and numbers, and are rarely marked on maps. An example is “Moo 11.”

   Example address: 112 Moo 5 Tambon Yum, Amphoe Thurian, Changwat Thurian.

Finally, don’t place full faith in Google Map, and don’t be afraid to stop and ask for directions. If you’re durian hunting, you’re on an adventure. Relax.

Finding A Place To Stay

Thailand is one of the few places that can truly be said to meet all budgets. From $2 dorm beds to $10 beachside cabinas to $100 suites, Thailand offers it all.

If you want, you can even sleep beneath the trees of a durian orchard, with a roof for protection, of course.
How much your room costs depends on both your comfort needs and your location. Beachside accommodations in any of the more touristic areas, like Phuket or any of the islands, are going to be more expensive than areas that don’t see as many tourists. You’ll find the highest rates for private rooms in Bangkok, however Bangkok also has a good selection of reasonably priced dormitories.

Budget rooms in Thailand tend to be stark. You’ll get a bed with clean sheets, a bar of soap, a towel, and that’s about it. Most include a shower with a small electric heater and western-style toilet, but if you go really budget, you may have to use a bathroom down the hall. Most are clean enough but have a worn, slightly neglected feeling influenced by stained or peeling paint and faded carpet.

The further you get from the touristic areas, the better value hotels you’ll find. One night, we stayed in a 4-star hotel for only 600 baht ($18.43) per night! That said, you can spend as much as you want on a hotel. There are plenty that offer Western-style service and prices.

One thing worth mentioning is that you may see signs around your hotel, not only warning you that durian is sadly banned, but that you must pay to bring a “guest” up to your room. They don’t just mean your friends. Prostitution is common in Thailand and some hotels have added fees to profit off any shenanigans. It’s so common in fact, that multiple blogs have sprung up dedicated to listing which hotels don’t charge for bringing prostitutes back to the room. Google the term “Guest Friendly,” if you’re interested.

Enough people go to Thailand every year that there are many resources online for finding accommodations in any given city. This book includes a province-by-province look at local accommodations as well as providing lists of homestays on orchards.

Here are some resources for researching where you want to stay.

**Wikitravel** is where we start to get an idea of the town and how difficult it is to find lodging. If Wikitravel is mostly blank, it’s a sign that not many people go there. We can usually find a comprehensive list of budget accommodations here.

**Airbnb** is a new site that searches a diverse range of housing, from dormitories to short-term private apartments. The coverage of Thailand is excellent.

**Wwoof Thailand** (Willing Workers On Organic Farms) is a forum and directory where small farmers can connect with travelers looking for an experience on the farm.

**National Parks Register** lists all of the national parks in Thailand with information on attractions and accommodations inside the park.

**Homestay Thai** is a government site dedicated to connecting small, rural communities with travelers. It provides information on neat, authentic homestays all over Thailand.

**Homestay.com** is a directory for connecting with families offering accommodations in their homes around the world. They have a great listing for Thailand that offers some neat cultural experiences, like staying with the Karen tribe.
Being Green

Avoiding Excess Water Bottles

One of the biggest sources of plastic accumulation when traveling in Thailand is water bottles. They’re cheap enough—a 1.5 liter bottle sells for as little as 13 baht—but the karmic toll of collecting 3 or more bottles of water a day can be taxing. (If you’re not drinking at least 3 liters a day, you’re probably dehydrated. It’s hot here.)

The Metropolitan Water Works Authority claims that tap water in Bangkok is safe to drink and even exceeds the standards of the World Health Organization. The water is probably fine leaving the water treatment plant, but some sources claim that once it has gushed through unmaintained waterlines and pipes it becomes a health hazard. We always brush our teeth with tap, but still avoid actually guzzling tap water to quench our thirst. Outside of Bangkok, tap water is not potable.

Luckily, there are water refill stations all over Thailand. These coin-operated machines spit out nearly 2 liters for as little as 1 baht. The machines are privately owned and operated and use reverse osmosis to filter the supposedly already clean tap water. It’s a great way to both save some baht and avoid purchasing extra plastic bottles. We drink it the every time we visit Thailand and have never regretted it.

Avoiding Plastic Bag Overuse

Even the government has admitted that the use of plastic bags in Thailand is a problem. According to one survey, the average Thai person uses and discards 8 plastic bags a day.

Thai vendors and cashiers put everything in plastic bags. If you buy one mango, they will place it in a bag. If you buy a durian, they will put it in a bag. If you buy a bag of street food that is already inside a plastic bag, they will put it inside of another bag. And sometimes, they will double-bag it to be extra nice. It’s like they don’t feel the transaction is complete unless they hand you your purchase suspended inside a white sheet of plastic.

A certain number of plastic bags are handy for maintenance of trash in the hotel, but there’s a limit. And it’s not eight. To reduce your plastic bag usage, you have to consciously say no during every single purchase. The phrase in Thai is mai ow thung.

Recycling in Thailand

Despite your best attempts to be green, you’re probably still going to end up accruing a collection of plastic juice or water bottles, bags, glass containers (if you drink alcohol) and Styrofoam trays from that bit of durian that just looked too good to pass up.

As an eco-conscious greenie, you’re probably flinching at chucking all those recyclable goods in the garbage can.
Thailand doesn’t have an organized recycling system, but recycling does happen. A study released in 2009 suggests that 22% of Thailand’s 15 million tonnes of annual trash is recycled, primarily thanks to the efforts of rubbish traders. Rubbish traders are typically the poorest people in Thailand who subsist from the money they make sifting through your trash to sell to recycling collection centers, which make their money cleaning and selling the materials to plants in China, Myanmar, Singapore, and England. Rubbish traders can sell paper, cardboard, glass, metal, and most plastics. You may see them walking down the street in the morning or late afternoon wielding push carts piled high with junk. Some live directly on the landfills. You can make life easier for them by placing your recyclables in separate bags than your trash. Recycling centers pay more money for bulk deliveries, so increasingly rubbish traders are organizing into cooperatives. You can donate your recyclables to these organizations knowing that you will be both helping to improve people’s lives and being responsible with your wastes.

Try contacting one of these organizations about recycling in Thailand.

Second Chance Bangkok is an organization founded to assist the community living in the Khlong Toey slums. You can request a recyclables pick up on their website. Zero Baht Shop (On Nut Soi 14, Prawet District, Facebook) is another cooperative in Bangkok that has organized to pay rubbish traders in food instead of money. They run a general store in which all products can be purchased with bottles, cans, and other recyclables. It’s a popular place for children to buy candy. Thai Eco Trade is one of the only places in Bangkok that accepts electronics for recycling. Wongpanit is the largest recycling collection company in Thailand with over 400 branches. You can bring your stash to the nearest center and be paid a pittance for the effort. They publish their purchasing prices on their website. UrbanGreenScene has more ideas for how to recycle in Thailand.

Avoid Littering

Walking along the beaches of Thailand or down a city street, the amount of garbage strewn around can be shocking. It may seem, by the piles of wet plastic bags, Styrofoam boxes, and colorful straws, that littering is not only totally acceptable in Thailand, but in vogue.

It can be tempting to go with the flow and become a litterbug, but have some discipline. Designated trash cans are widespread and easy to find throughout cities in Thailand, so there’s really no excuse for adding your trash to the piles accruing along the curbs.
Another incentive to be green is that littering is actually illegal, punishable by a hefty fine. In many cities, you can be fined up to 2,000 baht for dropping as little as a cigarette butt. So be a good example and put your trash where it belongs.

**Being Vegetarian in Thailand**

Whether or not you believe eating a vegetarian diet is better for the planet is personal, but once you’ve seen an outdoor meat market in Thailand you may choose to go vegetarian just for personal hygiene reasons. We tend to think avoiding meat dishes has helped us avoid many of the tummy woes experienced by other travelers.

Vegetarian food is so delicious and abundant in Thailand that carrot-eaters shouldn’t have any qualms about traveling and eating extensively throughout the Kingdom. If all else fails, there’s plenty of durian.

However, here are a few tips and tricks which will make things much easier.

First, be aware that there is no direct translation for vegetarian in Thai. The closest they get is *mang sa wirat*, which means you avoid visible meat but aren’t strict about it. Fish sauce, meat broth, eggs, dairy, and sometimes even shrimp and other seafood are fair game. Dried shrimp, or *goong haeng*, is a common topping.

The closest word to *vegan* is *jay*, which is actually a religious diet that avoids all animal products as well as garlic and some pungent herbs. However, some cooks will still add the ubiquitous fish sauce, so go ahead and request its omission by saying *mai sai ow nam plaa* (no want fish sauce).

It’s also worth noting that there are three types of tofu in Thailand, and two of them aren’t vegan. Fish tofu is just soy protein mixed with fish, and egg tofu doesn’t have any soy at all. They both go by the term *tau hu*, which can be a confusing and unpleasant surprise if you haven’t tasted fish in several years.

Vegetarianism, or some form of it, is practiced by Buddhists several times a month on full moons, new moons, and sometimes quarter moons. They consider the omission of meat a fast. On these days you will find a larger selection of vegetarian food at street stalls.

If you enjoy eating more simply, like we do, street stalls have a great selection of raw or steamed whole foods regardless of the phase of the moon. Keep a look out for carts bearing boiled peanuts and edamame and steamed purple and orange sweet potatoes, pumpkin, corn, cassava, and bananas, which are sometimes grilled instead. In the evening, you can often find a selection of plain boiled vegetables and greens at food carts selling grilled fish or eggs.

Even in the evening many of the stalls will sell fresh fruit, and during the season you’ll find many small roving vendors selling durian. If you want to ditch the veggies and just eat durian that’s totally understandable. It’s what we’d do.
There are plenty of resources online for vegetarians traveling in Thailand, but here are a few we recommend.

HappyCow.net is the world’s most extensive database for veggie-friendly stores and restaurants. They have great coverage of Thailand.

Vegetarian Thai Food Guide by Mark Wiens of migrationology.com taught us almost everything we know about the veggie scene in Thailand. It’s full of tips and tricks on ordering as well as suggestions for easy adaptations of common dishes so you can eat anywhere.

HealthFoodThailand is an online store stocking specialty health food items that ships to anywhere in Thailand.

Bangkok Vegan Meet Up gathers to enjoy vegan potlucks and other activities like raw food demos.

**Finding Organic Food in Thailand**

Awareness of the importance of chemical-free food is on the rise in Thailand. Most companies are aware of how important a healthy image is, and label their food accordingly. In fact, there are so many health food oriented labels that truly organic produce tends to get lost in the mix.

There are 30 different labels used on food in Thailand, all with different connotations, from Dolphin-safe to Fairtrade to Thailand’s own incomprehensible Safe Food labels. Finding truly pesticide-free food is not easy. As mentioned in Health, Safety and Pesticides, most eco-conscious farms in Thailand do not foliar spray and tend to follow government regulations for pesticide use, but are definitely not organic.

If you are chemically sensitive or if eating organically is one of your priorities, use the following resources to help you find what you need on your travels.

Ecolabel.net explains the various food and product labels found in Thailand.

Organic meet-up group This active Bangkok-based meet-up group keeps a calendar of farmers markets, cooking classes, and other events to talk about the importance of organic food.

Green Net Cooperative is Thailand’s largest distributor of organic foods. They work to support organic farming practices by connecting the farmers with consumers. You can buy some organic products on their website. Check out their page Where to Buy Organic Products.

The Urban Green Scene covers all angles of an environmentally conscious lifestyle. Check out How To Know The Fruit and Veggies I’m Buying Are Really Organic?

**Concerned about GMO Fruit?**
In Thailand, you don’t need to be. Even if a GM durian existed (which it doesn’t) Thailand does not allow GM crops to be grown commercially. This is mainly because the majority of Thailand’s produce is exported to the European Union and Japan, both of which have a zero tolerance for GMO’s. Growing genetically modified fruits and vegetables would be to risk losing the country’s main export market.

However, Thailand politics have wavered on whether or not to support GM development. Since the early 1990s Thailand has set up field experiments with the Flavr Savr Tomato, Bt cotton, corn, green beans, chilies, GM pineapple from Australia, and Hawaii’s GM papaya.

This last fruit created a ruckus in 2004 when it was found to have escaped from an experimental plot into hundreds of papaya farms in Kanchanaburi, sparking farmer outrage. There have been rumors of other accidental leaks as well, spurring enough negative press that it is unlikely Thailand will approve sale of GM seeds in Thailand in the near future.

While fruits and vegetables are guaranteed to be GM-free, most imported foods are not. Thai regulations require labeling if a product contains a certain amount of GM corn or soybean, but exactly how that amount is quantified is unclear. You can try to decipher the guidelines for labeling GM products yourself by following this link.

Our Favorite Thailand Travel Resources

Handy Websites

Google Translate is necessary for exploring Thai websites. Use it. The results may be hilarious, but most of the time you can discern the useful information.

Google Maps are great and work even in Thailand, although not always with complete accuracy. They seem to have Bangkok pretty well figured out. If you’re in Thailand, Google may decide to give you the Thai version of the maps, which is a problem for anyone who can’t learn a new alphabetic script overnight. To set it to English, use the old version and click on the box in the upper right hand corner that says either “Satellite” or “Streetview.” A menu will pop up, and one of the options is “English.”

Bing Maps sometimes works better than Google maps.

Travel

Skyscanner is our favorite research tool for finding cheap flights. It allows you to search for the cheapest flights between destinations within the time period of a month or even a whole year. You can even search from a specific departure to “Everywhere” to figure out the cheapest routes. Note that the initial price lists are based on previous searches, and can lag behind. We use Skyscanner to as an initial research tool, and then book directly through the airline. www.skyscanner.com

Expedia is another way to book flights. A few times we’ve had trouble with using our credit cards with Asian airlines, and so we just book the same flight through Expedia.
Air Asia is one of the best budget carriers and flies in and out of Don Muang Airport. Tickets frequently go on discount, so keep an eye on their specials page.

Thailand By Train is a great resource for planning trips by train in Thailand. We realize the Thai government has its own official railway website, but for some reason we find this site easier to navigate. We always use it first to figure out where we're going and then double-check with the official one.

The Man in Seat 61 gives a great overview of overland travel options in Thailand and its neighboring countries.

Bicycle Thailand is Thailand’s largest English language bicycle resource. From races and events, club meet-ups, lists of shops and just basic information, this site is awesome. You can keep in touch at their Facebook.

Planning Your Trip

Travel Fish is our favorite travel website. Both a forum and a blog, it's like a hipper Lonely Planet that doesn't just try to sell you upscale backpacking hostels and is written by people who travel on and off the beaten track. It's also free.

Thaivisa is a lively forum for expats living in Thailand. Most of them seem to be married to or dating Thai women, leading to some fascinating discussions of Thai culture. It’s a great place to post questions as the forum’s very active members typically reply really quickly. We've had better answers from this forum than from other popular travel forums, like Lonely Planet’s Thorn Tree, Tripadvisor, or Travel Fish forums.

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is the government funded organization to help you travel in Thailand. Their website hides an impressive amount of information in its unintuitively arranged pages, but the real value of TAT is that you can email, Facebook, or call them with your individual question. Each province has a regional TAT office with its own Facebook page and there is usually someone around who can answer your question in English. It is an invaluable resource for people interested in fruit festivals.

Wikitravel is a great overview of towns, things to do, and accommodations. As mentioned earlier, you can get a feeling for how easy a place will be to navigate based on how much information is stuffed onto the page.

Migrationology is a foodie travel blog based out of Bangkok, written by Mark Wiens. He's got tons of tips and reviews for eating and traveling in Thailand. He also happens to really love durian and we often check out his site when planning our own trips.

Nomadic Matt is one of the most well-known travel bloggers. He’s spent the last 8 years trotting the globe and is consistently listed in the Top Ten Travel Blogs. He lived in Bangkok for 2 years and has some great articles about traveling in Thailand. He also has a forum where you can ask questions.

Coconuts Bangkok is a hip local news site for the Bangkok area. Keep up with recent Thai news, events, and things to do around Bangkok and Thailand.

Resources for Horticultural Hobbyists
Thailand's Official Agritourism Site is the Department of Agriculture’s official site on promoting agritourism in Thailand. The website is in Thai, so use Google Translate to navigate.

Department of Agriculture Durian Online Library is an impressive collection of resources on durian. You can probably find the answer to any question you had about Thai durian, if you can read Thai.

Tropical Fruit Forum is an online discussion page about tropical fruits. Members have a lot of knowledge about fruit species and cultivars grown in Asia and can help you ID a fruit if you find something and don’t know what it is.

Green Travel Thailand is a Thai eco-tourism website with great resources for fruit-lovers. Download this PDF with information about various fruit seasons and agro-tourism attractions.

Back to beginning of Travel Tips.
Regional Guides

Central Region: Bangkok and Around

It's hard to believe that the tumultuous streets of Bangkok, clogged with traffic and food carts, were once the most esteemed durian orchards of Thailand.

Sometimes known as the *Venice of the East*, Bangkok's **winding canals (khlongs)** once provided the natural irrigation to a fertile fruit plain covered in orchards. Durian was carefully developed in raised orchard beds woven between the canals. Over the years successive flooding and urban development whittled down the fruit producing areas, and ironically, the durians that once made the region famous are now imported from other provinces.

Now it's the huge, sprawling fruit and vegetable markets that are the main attraction for fruit hunters in Bangkok. However, nestled among the high rises and urban development of Greater Bangkok there are still a few quiet places where durian trees grow. The only place you'll find full-scale durian orchards is in **Nonthaburi**, which still produces the most famous, coveted, and expensive durian in Thailand. The rest are scattered in backyards and gardens in **Thonburi** or **Samut Prakan**. If you have more
time, consider a day trip or overnight excursion to one of the durian growing regions in Kanchanaburi, Nakhon Nayok, or Prachinburi.

**Bangkok**

**Nonthaburi**

**Thonburi**

**Samut Prakan**

**Kanchanaburi**

**Nakhon Nayok**

**Prachinburi**

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**BANGKOK**

Bangkok is the central hub of Thailand. Most people start their adventures here and then pass through again on their way to a different part of Thailand. Chances are, if you're going to Thailand, at one time or another you'll find yourself in the capital city.
And that's just fine. Bangkok is a teeming, chaotic city with plenty to do and see. Food carts of steaming unknown dishes and exotic fruits line the city streets where motorcycle taxis weave insanely through nearly standstill traffic.

Whether you're a fruit enthusiast or a fruitarian, you're unlikely to go far without finding something new and interesting to put in your mouth. Depending on the season, roving street vendors sell lychees, rambutans, mangoes, slices of jackfruit, and durian. If you're thirsty, street carts abound peddling coconuts, sugar cane juice, and freshly squeezed tangerine juice.

If you're still hungry or just want a bit of excitement, Bangkok's huge, labyrinthine produce markets are a major highlight, but for those seeking a less urban glimpse at Bangkok's recent agrarian past, there are still a number of quiet refuges surprisingly close to the city. For a touch of nature, head across the river to Thonburi or Samut Prakan.

Jump to Bangkok Map

**Highlights**

- Gawk at the prized (and pricey) Ganyao durians on Yaowarat Road in Chinatown.
- Take a long tailed boat ride through canals lined with orchards.
- Go for a bike ride through fruit orchards in Bangkok's Green Lung.
Durians to Look For

Ganyao is by far the most popular durian in Bangkok, but its high price is a bit of a turn off for many people. For those unwilling to empty their wallets for durian, most vendors also carry Monthong. If you know to ask, they might also be able to pull out a Chanee or Puangmanee.

Most grocery stores carry prepared packets of Monthong even once the season is officially over. Check there or in Chinatown for the durian grown out of season.

If you spend much time exploring Thonburi, keep an eye out for a rare variety leftover from the Ayutthaya days called Koeb Mae Ta, said to have a distinctive flavor.

Hot tip: In Bangkok you can buy durian on Facebook. Suan Trong-rerk in Rayong province is now offering deliveries to various locations in Bangkok and Chonburi. (Facebook Page, Bangkok Post Article.)
Markets

Bangkok is famous for large, chaotic, and sometimes smelly outdoor markets. These large produce markets are where you’ll see the biggest variety and abundance of fruits arriving from every corner of Thailand. If you’re looking for something special, or want a better selection of durian, head to one of these. To really get lost in the hubbub, go early in the morning or late in the evening, after dark.

The truly durian-devoted should head to the wholesale and distribution points just north of Bangkok, in Pathum Thani. This is where the fruit distributors in Bangkok get their goods, and you can, too. They will sell to tourists, but be prepared to buy in bulk.

Smaller sidewalk markets with more limited selection pop up all over Bangkok in the early mornings and late afternoons. Each neighborhood will have one to supply the local populace with basic staples and snacks. They are so numerous that it’s not worth listing them in this book, but chances are there’s one just around the corner from your hotel.
Tourism agencies tend to make a big deal about floating markets, but you don’t have to drive all the way to Amphawa or Damnoen Floating Markets to see people selling produce and food from wooden canoes. There are numerous floating markets around Bangkok. While not the best place for quality produce (or durian), floating markets are an interesting cultural outing and sometimes a good place to connect with local growers who have farms nearby.

1. **Klong Toei Market** (Rama IV Road near Khlong Toei MRT Station) Not for the faint of heart or nose, Khlong Toei Market is Bangkok’s largest wet market. Frequent by locals buying in bulk this market is sure to be an authentic, smelly, and somewhat harried experience especially if you come early. From Exit 2 of Khlong Toei MRT Station turn right and walk about 500 meters.

2. **Or Tor Kor** (Located near Kamphaeng Phet MRT Station) Described in the Bangkok Post as Bangkok’s cleanest market, Or Tor Kor is a great place to go for those not yet initiated into the Asian wet market. The market is reknown for high-quality produce, and most of Bangkok’s high-end chefs are said to shop here. It’s located just across the street from the famous Chatuchak Weekend Market, a massive 35-acre open market of more than 15,000 stalls. If you can make it out of Chatuchak’s labyrinthine assortment of stalls, head to Or Tor Kor for a durian snack.

3. **Saphan Khao Fruit Market** (Located on Soi Lukluang 7 near Chaturapak Rangsan Bridge) An enormous fruit market and distribution point that is a favorite among local fruit lovers, Saphan Khao Fruit market is seldom visited by nonlocals. We found some of the best-priced durian here. Located near the Saphan Khao MRT Station in Si Yaek Maha Nak, Dusit District.

4. **Wang Mahanak Market** (Located downtown on Damrong Rak Rd) Mahanak Market is a sprawling outdoor fruit and vegetable market and a great place inside downtown Bangkok to search out exotic, interesting, and just plain tasty fruits. Look for the durian along the perimeters on Damrong Road.

5. **Yaowarat Road Durian** (Located Downtown near Hua Lamphong Railway Station) This is one of the few places in Bangkok where you can reliably find durian 365 days of the year. It’s also smack dab in the middle of Chinatown. Search for trucks loaded with pricey Ganyao and rolling street carts with Monthong as you wander through the crowded storefronts.

6. **Hua Takhe Market** (Located on Lat Krabang Road) Sometimes called Suvarnabhumi Market, the best thing about this small fresh market on Lat Krabang Road is that it is only 4 km from Suvarnabhumi International Airport. If you have a short layover and just want to get your hands on some fresh durian, this is probably your best shot.

7. **Talad Mai Don** (Located on Kamphaeng Phet 6 Road) Another small local fresh market, this market is located near the entrance to Don Mueang International Airport and only 1 km from Don Mueang Railway Station. Since this market is little known and might be hard to find, use the GPS coordinates: 13.916312, 100.598454.

8. **Samrong Market** (Located on Sukhumvit Road) This large fruit and vegetable market has great deals on durian and other fruits. To get the craziest discounts, do your
shopping around 11 am. The market is on the border of Samut Prakan and Bangkok on Sukhumivit Road, about a 10-minute walk from the Bearing BTS Station.

9. **Talad Thai** (31 Moo 9 Phaholyothin Road km.42, Klong 1, Klongluang, Pathum Thani Tel: 029 0844909 [Website](#)). At 500 rai, this may be the largest market in Thailand. Take any northbound bus or minivan to Rangsit, then a taxi or songthaew.

10. **Talad Si Mum Muang** (355/155-166 Moo 15 Phaholyothin Road, Khuhkhot, Lam Luk Ka, Pathum Thani. [Website](#)).

11. **Taling Chan Floating Market** See Thonburi.

12. **Khlong Lat Mayom Floating Market** See Thonburi.

13. **Bang Nam Phueng** See Samut Prakan.

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**Markets Worth Mentioning**

**Bangkok Farmer's Market** ([Website](#), [Facebook](#)) is a rotating market that takes place every Saturday in a different location in Bangkok. Here you can find organic, GMO-free produce as well as a vibrant community that supports healthy and sustainable lifestyle choices. Check their very active facebook page for updates on events and this week’s market location.
Maeklong Railway Market (Talad Rom Hub) 2 hours from Bangkok in neighboring Samut Songkhram is the “most dangerous market in the world.” Set directly on the train track, vendors must scramble to put down awnings and remove produce from the tracks every time a train comes whistling by.

Amphawa Floating Market, a 1.5-hour drive from Bangkok in neighboring Samut Songkhram Province, is the best photo opportunity for floating markets. Expect few tourists and lots of boats.

Damnoen Floating Market is worth mentioning because of its popularity, the market in Damnoen has been overrun by tourists and touts. Still, you're likely to find durian here in the right season.

Recommended Guides

Bangkok is teeming with guide services all willing to take you wherever you wish to go. Here are two worth getting in touch with.

Tour with Tong offers private, customized tours around Bangkok for a reasonable price. We've used her services to hire a translator to help us navigate the durian orchards of Nonthaburi.

Paul offers fruit-themed bike tours of Khung Bang Krachao (see Samut Prakan). You can get in touch with him via the Bangkok Tree House or at 086 9715544.

Getting There

Most people fly into Bangkok via one of the two airports, each located about 30 km from the city. A free shuttle bus runs between the two airports every 30 minutes, which takes about an hour. Suvarnabhumi International Airport is the new airport serving most international carriers and is connected to the city by Bangkok's Airport Link Skytrain. Don Mueang International Airport is older and serves the budget airlines. Get there via either the bus or a train from Hualamphong Station. A taxi from downtown to Don Mueang Airport should cost less than 200 baht.

The closest market to Suvarnabhumi Airport is Hua Takhe Market. The closest Market to Don Mueang International Airport is Talad Mai Don Mueang (New Market). See map.

There are three bus stations in Bangkok each serving a different cardinal direction. Ekkamai Station (Eastern Bus Terminal) serves Chonburi, Rayong, Chanthaburi and Trat, Mo Chit Station (The Northern Bus Terminal) serves all provinces north of Bangkok, and Sai Tai Mai Station (The Southern Bus Terminal) serves provinces west and south of Bangkok. Don't confuse Mo Chit Bus Station with the Mo Chit MRT Station—they're about 2 km distance from each other.

Minivans from Victory Monument head to all destinations, or you can grab a seat at the appropriate direction-bound bus station.
Overnight **trains** departing **Hualamphong Station** are a great way to travel to the extreme northern, southern, and eastern provinces of Thailand. To go west, you must cross the Chao Phraya River to **Thonburi Station**.

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**Getting Around**

**Water taxis** are one of the most enjoyable ways to get around Bangkok. The boats shuttle passengers up and down the narrow canals, or *khlongs*, giving you a behind-the-scenes look into people's backyards and clean laundry. View the [khlong routes and timetable](#).

Another fun way to see the city is via Bangkok’s new **Pun Pun Bicycle Share Program** (see English explanation at [Bicycle Thailand](#)). The fleet of 400 cruiser bikes is distributed at 50 stations across the city. Once you pay the membership fee (220 baht), you can rent a bike for the day at only 10 baht per hour to see the sights and visit as many markets as you care to. They are not intended for overnight rentals, so remember to return your bike at any Pun Pun station by 8 pm.

The **Mass Rapid Transit (MRT)** and the **Bangkok Mass Transit System (BTS Sky Train)** run every three to six minutes between 6 am and midnight. The system of monorails and subways is easy to navigate, cheap, and hassle-free. However, if you are
only traveling one or two stops or need to switch between the MRT and BTS, it may be cheaper to take a motorcycle taxi. For groups taxis are likely the cheapest option. Find routes and schedules.

The extensive citywide public bus system is an incredibly cheap, if slow way to get around. Thankfully, the directions on Google Maps are usually reliable. You may want to double check at Thai Transit or Transit Bangkok. Since buses do not always accurately follow timetables, plan to arrive at the bus stop a few minutes early.

Motorcycle taxis, tuk-tuks, and taxis are easily found in Bangkok, as are songthaews. In our experience, taking a tuk-tuk is the most expensive option, as the drivers often hang out in tourist areas, keep a tourist map tucked in the window, and expect tourist prices. They can also be found around large wet markets.

Motorcycle taxis tend to be fairly priced, although it’s worth haggling for 10 or 20 baht. In Bangkok, the motorcycle taxis are organized into cooperative groups. They are easily recognizable—just look for a group of men in matching orange or green vests lounging on motorbikes near markets, bus stops, and MRT or BTS Stations. If you can handle weaving between traffic, motorbike taxis are the fastest way to get through rush hour.

Surprisingly, taxis are very reasonably priced. We found that it is sometimes cheaper for the two of us to take a taxi than take the MRT or BTS! All taxis are metered. Rates start at 35 baht for the first kilometer and go up about 5 baht per kilometer. Use numbeo to approximate the cost of taking a taxi to your destination.

Taxis come in a rainbow of colors, but the most common are pink, blue, and the bi-colored green and yellow. Each color communicates something different about who owns the taxi. The green and yellow are owned by the driver. Taxis can sometimes be difficult to hail, especially during rush hour or during a heavy rainstorm. Look for a glowing red light in the windshield that signals an empty taxi.

**Where to Stay**

Accommodations are not as cheap in Bangkok as in other areas of Thailand. If you want you can pay western prices for a three- or four-star hotel, and you can find all the familiar hotel chains. This information is easy to find online.

Budget travelers will have to dig a little deeper into their pockets to stay in Bangkok, and may consider limiting their time there. Be prepared to spend as much for a dorm room as you might for a private beachside bungalow in some areas. Dorm rooms range between 250–400 baht and the cheapest private rooms go for 450 baht or more.

Khao San Road is the famed backpacker area, but it’s not the only place with cheap accommodations. Khao San is also inconveniently far from the MRT or BTS train lines or any public park. We like to exercise, so we always stay near Lumphini Park, which has a 2.5 km walking track and a small gym.
For more tips on figuring out where to stay, check out our Travel Tips.

If you desire accommodations in a more natural setting but within easy reach of Bangkok, head across the river to Thonburi or Samut Prakan, or just north to Nonthaburi, where you can still find the rare orchard.

Back to Central Region.

Nonthaburi

As recently as 2011 it was fairly easy to find durian growing around Bangkok, especially in this small province just a few miles north of downtown. A simple long-tailed boat ride down the Om Non Canal would bring you past numerous durian orchards and deposit you at the Bang Rak Noi Agritourism Center. The center is still there, but a huge flood in November 2011 damaged nearly all of the durian orchards, canceling the annual Nonthaburi Durian Festival for at least the following five years.

Durian from Nonthaburi has long been thought to be the highest quality durian in all of Thailand. It's historically fetched a high price, but with so few durian trees left, the price of a Nonthaburi durian shot up to tens of thousands of baht for a single durian. This makes Nonthaburi durian the most expensive durian in the world, if you can get it.
Durians are sold months ahead of the harvest, auctioned off when the fruits are still tiny.

Unless you are seriously well off or have very good connections, it's unlikely you'll get the opportunity to taste a Nonthaburi durian. We haven't, although we've come very close. If you ever do taste one, please do contact us and tell us about it.

Remarkably, there is actually more land planted with durian now than there was before the flood. The destruction inspired a sense of loss, and people began replanting both damaged orchards and old, defunct bits of land. In 2012, the Ministry of Agriculture launched the Bring Home Durian Non project, donating 25,000 durian saplings to farmers around Nonthaburi. It will be a few years before the trees are mature enough to produce fruit, but it should be easier to get a Nonthaburi Durian in the future.

To find a durian orchard within easy reach of Bangkok, hire a long-tailed boat and ask the driver to take you down a canal with durian orchards. You should still see some growing in Bang Rak Noi subdistrict, Mu 2. To eat a durian, stop off at one of the local markets and snag one off the pile of imports from Chanthaburi or Rayong.

**Bang Rak Noi Agritourism Center** (55/2 Moo 6 Bang Rak Noi, Nonthaburi. Accessible from the Om Non Canal, Tel: 02 9035 766 / 08 0599 8317) Ms. Sawai Thessaneeyavej's 10-acre durian orchard, established in 1959, was opened to the public as an educational center in 2005 to show off Nonthaburi's most famous crop and unique agricultural style. The 2011 flood severely damaged the orchard, but the center is still open and is working on replanting the durian orchard. So far, more than 5 acres have been replanted with Monthong, Chanee, Ganyao, and Nockyib. The entrance fee is 110 baht, including a complimentary coconut and traditional dessert called Miang Kam.

**Pak Kret District** Straddling the Chao Phraya River, Pak Kret District is divided fairly evenly between the heavily developed east and the fairly rural west, where most of the durian orchards in Nonthaburi are located. The district includes Koh Kret, a small island in the Chao Phraya River that is one of the last places in Bangkok not accessible to cars. You can rent bikes at the pier or simply walk the circumference of the island. During the floods the entire island was submerged, but a few people have replanted their durian orchards intermixed with bananas and papayas. One example is Ban Suan Koh Kret (Tel: 081 6459489), a small orchard and homestay set 200 meters back from the main trail along extremely narrow, raised boards. They have a website but at the time of writing there isn’t much information posted.

Read more about our day trip to Koh Kret.

**Bang Yai District** suffered the most damage in the 2011 flood and very few of the original durian orchards remain. Locals are replanting, but it will be a few years before there will be any fresh durian around. You can stay at Thai House (32/4 Moo 8 Tambol Bangmaung Amphoe Bangyai Nonthaburi. Tel: 02 9039611, 02 9975161. Website), a traditional teakwood house set back in the orchards and canals of Nonthaburi. The owners have replanted their orchards with mango, pomelo, and coconut.
Bang Ku Wiang Floating Market in Bang Kruai District is one of the biggest floating markets in the Bangkok area and one of the least visited. This is probably because most of the action takes place between 4 and 8 am. It's a meeting point for local farmers to sell their produce, which makes it a great place for the fruit hunter. You might actually find some durian grown locally here. Just don't get your hopes up.
THONBURI

Once upon a time, the banks of the *khlongs* meandering through Thonburi were overrun with orchards. Durian first gained popularity here during the Ayutthaya period, and then spread north to Nonthaburi. Just across the river from Bangkok, Thonburi somehow managed to escape urban development for years. It couldn't last forever though, and in recent years the area has seen rapid development. This has dwindled the number of orchards, but Thonburi is still the place people go to seek out a quiet, natural area near Bangkok. It's also popular with cyclists, and a number of bike tour agencies offer tours through the orchards of Thonburi.

Most tour agencies in Bangkok offer canal tours of Thonburi, but you can also grab a long-tailed boat at one of the piers or at the floating markets. Tell the driver you want to see durian trees. Trees are around, especially in the Taling Cham area. If your driver doesn't speak English, use the durian specific vocabulary in Useful Words and Phrases. They'll probably think you are hilarious.

The best places to buy durian are the **Talad Taling Cham** and **Khlong Lat Mayom Floating Markets** (See [Bangkok Map](#)). Taling Cham is the larger of the two, but has slowly drifted toward the bank so that it is now more of a riverside market than a floating market. Both are accessible by road as well, but are more fun to see by boat.
SAMUT PRAKAN

A large province to the south of Bangkok, Samut Prakan extends both east and west of the Chao Phraya River and encompasses Suvarnabhumi International Airport, although just barely. While the eastern part of the province is entirely urban and industrial, the western side is still mainly composed of fishing villages and fruit orchards once famous for growing shogun oranges. More importantly, it’s the easiest natural escape from the traffic and pollution of Bangkok and a relaxing way to see some of Thailand’s exotic fruits.

Nestled in a loop of the Chao Phraya River just across from the industrial ports at Khlong Toei, Khung Bang Krachao is a forgotten clump of village and jungle known locally as Bangkok’s Green Lung. This little area in Phra Padaeng District is comprised of 1,180 rai (465 acres) of waterways and narrow elevated boardwalks through mangrove forests and fruit orchards. Here you can find coconuts, jackfruits, mangoes, areca nuts, gac fruits, and even a few young durian trees.

The most popular way to see Khung Bang Krachao is to rent a bicycle at the pier or take one of the guided bike tours. Ask for Paul at the Bangkok Tree House Eco-resort (Bang namphueng, Moo 1, Samut Prakarn, Greater Bangkok, Tel: 08 29951150, Website). Paul knows what the deal is with fruit hunters. You can also rent bicycles at
the **Bang Namphueng Floating Market**, open on Saturday and Sundays and an excellent spot to look for durian.

Near the market is the **P Y Aoy Longstay** (7 Moo 7, Tambon Bangnampeung, Phrapradaeng District Tel: 02 8150377/ 081 6185182 /086 8824753, [Website]) a wooden Thai house surrounded by a large garden of longan, mango, santol, and oranges. There are also a number of small, nameless guesthouses and homestays along the riverside that are better recommended. Ask for recommendations at the Bangkok Tree House.

See Lindsay's bike tour with Paul in Bangkok's Green Lung.

Nakhon Pathom is not great for durian, but fruit hunters in general might think about dropping by. It's on the way to Kanchanaburi and probably has a few durians around, but the main deal here is pomelos. Every year there is festival to celebrate the giant grapefruits, which you can see growing if you take the Mahasawat Canal Tour. You can also stay at **Sampran Riverside** (Km. 32 Pet Kasem Highway, Nakhon Pathom, Tel: 03 4322544 [Website]) This 10-acre certified organic farm and eco-retreat center is located about 30 km from Bangkok in the neighboring province of Nakhon Pathom. They grow Thai vegetables and fruits such as pomelo, mango, mulberry, banana, guava, coconut, and papaya for the Sookjai Organic Weekend Market. Durian can be sought at nearby Donwai Riverside Market.
KANCHANABURI

Production: 235 tonnes per year

Most people come to Kanchanaburi to visit the waterfalls at Erawan National Park, get a glimpse of Burmese culture, or buff up their history with a visit to the River Khwai, made famous in World War II during the construction of the Death Railway. Kanchanaburi isn't a major durian growing region. What puts Kanchanaburi on the durian map is Ban Phasawan Resort (Website), a new development that combines a Disney-esque taste for giant concrete fruit and a concern for preserving Thailand's durian diversity.

Here, not only can you sleep in a durian orchard, you can actually sleep inside of a durian in a durian orchard. I imagine you could even eat durian inside the durian, too. Each of the twenty private bungalows is made of poured concrete fashioned into the shape of a fruit or vegetable. You can sleep in a dragonfruit, a pineapple, a rambutan, or a mangosteen, interspaced with actual fruit trees laden with fruit for guests to sample. Durian is not complimentary, but can be purchased on site.

Twelve years ago, the owner began collecting durian varieties from Nonthaburi, hoping to preserve some of the rare ones from the repeat flooding. Now he has over 100 varieties of durian, along with hundreds of species of other fruits and flowers from all
over the world. His goal is to create an agricultural education center, catering mostly to school groups, conventions, and the horticulturally obsessed.

Unfortunately, getting to Ban Phasawan is not easy. You'll need your own transportation. It’s near a hot spring, a waterfall, and nothing else. The closest town is Thong Pha Phum, 30 km away, which is a tiny place composed of little more than a market (with lots of durian). Thong Pha Phum is the major durian growing region in Kanchanaburi and holds a **Fruit Festival** the third week of June at the top of nearby Vachiralongkorn Dam, but is not prepared for foreign tourists. To visit this area, rent a motorbike or car from Kanchanaburi Town or Songkhlaburi.

**See more of our pictures of Ban Phasawan**

If you're interested in permaculture and sustainable living, check out **Shanti Farm** ([Website](#)), an eco-hotel and orchard located in the Erawan National Park. Guests are encouraged to pick the fruits planted around the bungalows, including 15 durian trees, guava, pomelo, jackfruit, tamarind, pomegranate, papaya, banana, passion fruit, dragonfruit, watermelon, and mango.

**NAKHON NAYOK**

**Production: 90 tonnes per year**
An easy two-hour trip from Bangkok, Nakhon Nayok has been made famous in the durian world by a small gem of an organic durian orchard owned by an artist named Chatri. At **Suan La-Ong-Fah or “Sky Mist Orchard”** (111/2 M.8 Tambon Kaopra, Tel: 089 7491735/ 03 82160356) you can find over 50 varieties of old durians from the Thonburi area, from the original Monthong to a small pink durian called Chomposee.

When a major flood hit Thonburi in the 1940s, Chatri's father saved cuttings of his dying trees and transported them to this new farm in Nakhon Nayok. Chatri is dedicated to preserving both these ancient varieties as well as the old, organic methods for growing them. In the last few years his farm has become famous among durian lovers from Bangkok, so you may find yourself rubbing elbows with a lot of other durian fanatics. To make sure there is plenty for all, arrange your visit ahead of time with Natto from Thailand Tour Guide (Email: thailandtourguide@asia.com Tel: 085 1083800). Chatri does not speak English, so if you wish to speak with him you’ll need a translator.

For more information see our [2012 visit](#) or our [2013 attempt to taste all his varieties](#).

Don't miss a rest stop at the nearby **Wat Durian**, a temple named for the durians that grow behind it. The large pink bathroom is attraction enough. If that isn’t enough pink, Nakhon Nayok is also home to two towering pink elephant gods. If you’re hungry or want to make an offering, durian and other fruit can be purchased in the parking lot.

Chatri doesn’t offer accommodations. If you want to stay nearby, try one of these two fruit farms that offer accommodations:

**Ban Saisamorn** (11/2 M.6 T. Hintang, Mueng Nakhon NayokDistrict, Tel: 087 0301824 / 080 5661901) 1,200+ baht/night.

**Tadan Orchard Homestay** (54/2 M.3 T. Hintang, Mueang Nakhon Nayok District, Tel: 03 7385 015) Accommodations are 150 baht/night plus 100 baht to eat freely from the fruit orchard.
PRACHINBURI

Production: 2,290 tonnes per year

On the flat plateau just east of Nakhon Nayok is a durian-growing area whose claim to fame is hard to validate. Prachinburi durian farmers say that their durians are so good they are indistinguishable from the expensive and coveted Nonthaburi durians.

It’s true that most are still grown on small farms using organic-friendly methods, with fertilizer techniques similar to those used in Nonthaburi. However, we don’t know if anyone making the claims has ever actually tasted a Nonthaburi durian in order to make the comparison (They’re darn hard to get, and we’ve been trying). We can attest that a durian grown in Prachinburi is exceptional.

The province advertises tourism attractions like crumbling ruins from the Dhavaravadi period, flat quiet roads perfect for bicycling, and abundant fruit—in particular durian and a special variety of Ma Fai. It’s a popular weekend getaway spot for nature enthusiasts escaping the air and noise pollution of Bangkok, in particular those with an appetite for fruit. Numerous small farms offer homestays, fruit buffets, orchard tours, and fresh fruit for sale. So many fruit farms are clustered along Highway 2001 that the road has even been given the nickname **Fruit Street**.
That said, most visitors to this area are Thai, and there are no amenities for those who don’t speak (or read) Thai. Destination points are spread out, so it’s advisable to either have your own form of transportation and a good map or go with a guided tour. You can find and sign up for group tours out of Bangkok on the regional website, [www.tat8.com](http://www.tat8.com). The Khao Ito Cycling Club occasionally does fruit orchard cycle tours. Contact Khun Nippon (Tel: 086-090-4945).

Skip to [Prachinburi Map](#)

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**Durians to Look For**

The majority of durians grown in Prachinburi are Monthong and Chanee. Strangely, given the comparison to Nonthaburi’s durian, Ganyao is very difficult to find. Any Ganyao you do find is likely to have been imported from nearby Rayong province.

**Markets**

**Nong Cha-Um Market** Located at the intersection of Hwy 33 and Hwy 319, this is a large distribution and wholesale market.

**Narai Suan Market** This bustling evening market is located at the intersection of Hwy 33 and Road 320. Vans coming and going to Bangkok stop here.
Orchards

Very little English is spoken in this area. Make arrangements through the Nakhon Nayok TAT.

1. Mai Ked Homestay 27/2 Moo 2, Tambon Mai Khet, Prachinburi District, Facebook Tel: 081 4544148 / 03 7454148 / 081 4589531) This small homestay is surrounded by a mixed orchard of pomelo, rose apple, mango, dragonfruit, rambutan, mangosteen, Monthong durian, and some of the best jackfruit we've tasted in Thailand. The homestay serves as a demonstration center for organic farming techniques. Neither one of the owners speaks English.

2. Suan Lungpao (See directions and map. Tel: 089 6036726) This organic durian farm is said to produce the best durians in all of Prachinburi. There are about 80 Monthong and Chanee trees over 50 years old. To get there turn off Road 3008 just
across the street from a petrol station and go straight. The road will turn into dirt. Just after a large clump of bamboo you will see a small sign on the right for the farm. Click on the map for more details.

3. Suan Sap Prasoet (60/1-2 Moo 8 Tambon Dong Khilek, Owner: Mr. Somyot Khumphlai, Tel: 08 60769343) Located off Road 3008.

4. Suan Sunalai (174/1 Moo 9 Tambon Dong Khilek, Mrs. Sam-ang Sunalai, Tel: 08 7195 7271 / 08 1649 9321) Located near the intersection of Hwy 33 and Road 2001, this large, 8 hectare orchard has more than 400 various fruit trees, including mangosteen and durian.

5. Suan Panya (60/3 Moo 16, Tambon Ban Phra, Tel: 03 7403134 /081 9496977, Contact Mr. Panya Bamrungwat, Durian and santol farm) Arrange tours and fruit buffet ahead of time. Located on Road 2001.

6. Suan Huat Chueng (133/2 Moo 8 Tambon Dong Khilek, Tel: 037 403568, 086 1441092, Mr. Manat Huatchueng) Dirt driveway off of Road 2001.

7. Suan Yothi (10/1 Mu 16 Tambon Ban Phra, Tel: 08 5433 5206. Owner: Mr. Yothi Chanrueang) Specializes in santol and durian.

Getting There

Vans leave Victory Monument in Bangkok every 30 minutes, taking about 2.5 hours. Vans headed to Prachinburi can also be caught at Mo Chit Bus Station or near Suvarnabhumi Airport.

Trains depart Hua Lamphong Station several times a day, arriving in about 3 hours.

Getting Around

Motorbike taxis are abundant, but unlike in Bangkok they do not wear the matching vests of a motorbike cooperative. There are songthaews, but might be difficult to use, unless you have a good command of Thai and know where you are going. You can hire a taxi, or make an arrangement with the Tourism Authority of Thailand Nakhon Nayok Branch before arriving.

Fruitless Things To Do

Wander the ruins at the ancient town of Sri-Mahosot
Join the Khao Ito Cycling Club on a tour. Click here for routes.
Go trekking in Than Lap National Park or Khao Yai National Park
Get a Thai-style therapeutic spa treatment at Ban Dong Bang Herbal Community, a center for learning about and receiving traditional herbal treatments.

Jump back to beginning of Central Region.
The East

Between the turquoise waters of the Gulf of Thailand and the Cardamom Mountains along the border of Cambodia, is Thailand's durian breadbasket. This region grows more than 50% of the durian in the entire country, along with a plethora of other fruits like mangosteen, longkongs, and rambutans. Each province celebrates the onset of the fruit season with a festival in mid-May, of which the Chanthaburi Durian Festival is the largest and most well-attended.

An interesting blend of rural agricultural zone and tourisy beaches, this eastern corner of Thailand is perfect for the Durian Tourist. There's certainly plenty to do. This area actually caters to domestic tourists looking for a relaxing, fruity weekend getaway and you'll find homestays on orchards, orchards open to tours, and fruit lunch buffets. Keep in mind that most farmers don't speak much, if any, English. If you're uncomfortable with being unable to speak to your host, hire a guide for a day trip.

Once you've had your fill of durian, head to the beach or one of the national parks to cool off. Most of the national parks have several waterfalls good for swimming, and if you bring along your excess durian seeds and shells you can watch the fish nibble and fight over the remains.
Chanthaburi
Rayong
Trat
Koh Chang

CHANTHABURI
Production: 223,889 tonnes per year

Spread along a winding river, Chanthaburi town is only ten miles from the coast, but feels worlds away. The city is surrounded by miles and miles of durian orchards, stretching in every direction. This is Thailand's durian capital, producing nearly half of the nation's total durian crop. Many durian processing factories are set up here. If you buy frozen durian in your home country, there's a good chance it was grown here.

At the beginning of each harvest the city celebrates the World Durian Festival, but durian has a much more mundane presence that gives the city a certain durian charm any time of year. Durian appears on street signs, in fountains, on license plates, and in the province's seal, along with Chanthaburi's other major resource, gems, and strangely, a lot of rabbits. Chanthaburi is a gem trading town, and on weekends the alleys and
sidewalks fill with gem merchants selling their sparkling wears. Hotels tend to fill up with traders from as far away as India, so it’s best to make arrangements beforehand, if you plan to arrive on a Friday or Saturday night.

Despite the heavy traffic of gem trading, Chanthaburi is not heavily touristy and relatively few people speak English. It's an authentic Thai town, replete with temples on every corner and a large, messy outdoor market where you can buy fruits and vegetables, fish, meat, and traditional cooked foods. The narrow one-way roads can be a bit confusing, so remember to bring a map with you until you know your way around.

Skip to [Chanthaburi Map](#).

This post will explain all the rabbits you'll see downtown.

### Highlights

- Take part in a speed-eating competition at the annual Durian Festival.
- Taste ancient or obscure durian varieties at the Horticultural Research Center.
- Cool off at a waterfall and watch the fish fight over your durian scraps.
**Durians to Look For**

**Puangmanee** originated in Chanthaburi and is quickly becoming a hot market item throughout Thailand. Its small size, beautiful orange-yellow flesh, and more intense flavor makes it a popular durian with those accustomed to the bite of Malaysian durians.

There are plenty of **100-year-old durian trees** in the area, grown from seed and given an individual name. Check at the Little Green Store or ask around.

The Chanthaburi Horticultural Research Center has a germplasm with some 200 varieties of durian gathered from all over the country. During the festival you can taste some of these cultivars. The center is also home to a few trees of other durian species, namely *Durio oxleyanus, Durio graveolens, Durio kutejensis, and Durio lowianus*. These species fruit in July. For curiosity's sake, the inedible *Durio mansonii* fruits mid-May.

If you like Thai food and durian, you'll be thrilled that it's been integrated into traditional Thai dishes at **Jantorn Pochana Restaurant**. Pick up some *Massaman Thurian Curry* and a side of *Thurian Som Tam* (green papaya salad). Follow it with a super sweet *Thurian Chuam* (durian in sugar syrup) for dessert. The restaurant is
located on Benchamarachuthis Road at 102/5-8 Soi Wat Mai, across the street from Kasemsarn Hotel, Tel. 039 302350.

**Durian Festival**

The durian festival is an internationally renowned event put on every year by the tourism board and the city government. Durian and other fruit vendors line the edges of Lake Taksin Park, but the festival sprawls toward the stadium with a market selling anything and everything and food vendors with a variety of local Thai dishes.

Highlights of the festival for the durian-minded are a free fruit-tasting tent with durian, rambutan, longkong, snakefruits and mangosteens (all you can eat except for the durian), a station showcasing rare varieties from the nearby Horticultural Research Center, and daily activities like speed-eating competitions, judging for best durian, largest durian, and strangest-shaped durian.

[Read more about the Chanthaburi Durian Festival.](#)

**Markets**
Talad Nam Phuu  This sprawling market is in the heart of the Old City near the Post Office. It covers multiple streets and is more or less divided into three sections: fruit, meat, and fish. Most of the meat is in the covered area, which if you're vegetarian is best avoided. The market is nearly shut down in the middle of the day, so do your shopping before 10 am or after 4 pm.

Talad Mamuang  Located just a few minutes walk from Nam Phuu market on Amphawa Road, Mamuang market is the early morning wholesale market. Activity begins at 3 am and continues to 6 or 7 am.

Little Green Corner Shop  This little hole-in-the-wall shop is usually stocked with a variety of durians, as well as coconuts and bananas. The lady who runs it is friendly and speaks scant English. Sometimes she has durian from a 100-year-old tree, so ask around. This is the best place to buy coconuts.

Heads Up: A small health food and organic shop carries organic shampoos, soaps as well as a surprising collection of organic products like Braggs Amino Acids. The shop is located 39/12 Sri Chan Roa, just around the corner from the River Guesthouse.

1. Talad Noen Soong  This is the major durian distribution and wholesale market. It is located at the intersection of Sukhumvit Rd (NH 3) and NH 3322 and consists of multiple large covered areas stacked high with durians. Here you can watch heavily-gloved men sort and pack the durians, tossing them football-style to each other.

2. Talad Pak Saeng  This large market is north of Mueang Chanthaburi at the junction of Sukhumvit Road (NH3) and Frontage Road (NH 317)

3. Chong Phakkat Thai-Cambodian Border Market  located near Ban Khlong Yai is 30 km from Pong Nam Ron Town and 20 km from Pailin on the Cambodian side. The market mostly specializes in knock-off goods and merchandise.

4. Ban Laem Thai-Cambodian Border Market, located at Ban Laem is 46 km from Pong Nam Ron Town, is another border market specializing in discounted goods and knock-offs.
Orchards and Homestays

1. Chanthaburi Horticultural Research Center (63 Moo 6 Tambon Tapon Khlung District, Tel: 03 9397030 / 03 9397146, Blog, Official website) Located 15 km south of Chanthaburi on Sukhumvit Road (Hwy 3), this 100-acre research center also functions as an Agritourism Center. Visitors can take free guided walking tours of the orchards or rent a bicycle. The center also has a small gift shop with durian t-shirts and other souvenirs. An impressive collection of over 200 durian varieties grows in the orchard, many of which are displayed for sampling at the Chanthaburi Durian Festival. There are also a few other species of durian, like Durio mansonii, Durio lowianus, Durio graveolens, Durio kutejensis, and Durio oxleyanus.

2. Suan Tho Thong (18 Moo 10 Tambon Khom Bang, Mueang District, Tel: 03 9459339 / 087 8355964) A 5-rai orchard with rambutan, longkong, and durian that offers fruit buffets. No accommodations.
3. **Suan Nai Krob Krua** (35/2 Moo 9 Tambon Khom Bang Mueang District, Contact Nong at 089 4059716). Local guide Nong invites fruit loving visitors to visit his family’s orchard for a tour and all you can eat buffets, including durian and mangosteen from trees more than 100 years old.

4. **Suan Sao Sudjai** (Moo 1 Tambon Phliu Laem Sing District, Tel: 081 3773190 / 087 5144949 / 03 9434092 [Website]) This small farm near the Pliu Waterfalls offers fruit tours and lunchtime buffets as well as accommodation for up to 15 people.

5. **Khao Bai Sri Collective** (11/1 Moo 4, Tambon Khao Bai Si Tha Mai District, Tel: 03 9356544/ 086 8349604, [Website]) A grassroots collective of six durian farms that all offer accommodations as well as fruit buffets. They offer a wide selection of homestays consisting of private rooms with fan or AC. Camping and work-trading is also possible. In this area you will find both durian and mangosteen trees more than 100 years old. Look for the Hua Bor tree, a tree nearly 200 years old that fruits toward the end of the season.

6. **Tha Mai Farm Homestay** (31/11 Thetsaban Sai 4 Road Tha Mai District, Tel: 081 4364934 / 086 3005334. [Website]) This homestay and farm is located close to Tha Mai town and offers a fruit buffet in addition to accommodations for up to 16 persons.

7. **Suan Sadetyat** (183/13 Moo 12 Hueysatorn, Tha Mai District, Located off NH 3322, Tel: 087 111133) This fruit orchard growing Ganyao, Montong, Chanee, Kradum durians as well as rambutan and mangoesteen, offers fruit tours and tasting for 50 baht. Turn off Hwy 3322 at the Khao Sukim Hospital. Accommodations are available for 500 baht/night.

8. **Faasai Resorts and Spa** (26/1 Moo 7, Sanamchai. Na Yai Ram District. Tel: 03 9417 404 / 081 3426234 / 086 8892595. [Website]). This eco-resort is the first of its kind in the Chanthaburi area. It has a small private garden with durian trees on the resort property as well as a larger wildlife protection park and orchard.

9. **Suan Kulapat** (Km. 298 Sukhumvit Road, Na Yai Ram District, Tel: 086 1550222, 081 80903660 [Website]) Offers tours and a fruit buffet of durian, mangosteen, rambutan, longkong, and longan. Children are half off. Call to make an appointment.

10. **Krating Country Resort** (21/7 Moo 2, Khao Khitchakut District, [Website], Tel: 03 94524536) This garden-hotel offers accommodation for 1,000 baht/night on land growing durian, longan, rambutan, and mangosteen.

### Local Durian Guides

Need a little more guidance? These three tour operators may provide the assistance you need to comfortably navigate the Chanthaburi durian regions.

**Faasai Resorts and Spa** (Contact Bronwen: [info@faasai.com](mailto:info@faasai.com) Tel: 086 8892595)

An ecotourism and permaculture resort run by a New Zealander, Bronwen Evans. In addition to having a small durian orchard on site, each May she and the staff organize group tours to fruit farms in the region.

**Raw Aussie Athlete** ([rawaussieathlete.com](http://rawaussieathlete.com)).
Every May, Grant Campbell leads a two-week raw food and health retreat in Chanthaburi around the same time as the Durian Festival. The group visits multiple durian orchards, temples, waterfalls, the beach, and the durian festival. If you are interested in health as well as fruit, this is an easy way to see a lot of what Chanthaburi has to offer, including the durian. Grant is a two-time champion of the Durian Speed Eating Contest, and makes sure there is plenty of durian around to be enjoyed.

Read about how much fun it is to hang with Grant.

Nong (0859821132 Facebook: Love Chanthaburi)

A Chanthaburi local, Nong assists fruit-fascinated tourists with visiting orchards, parks, and waterfalls. He speaks excellent English and is very knowledgeable about the area. Without Nong, this guidebook would not be possible.

This post is about Nong.

Getting There

Buses leave Ekamai Station (Eastern Bus Station) in Bangkok for the Chanthaburi Bus station every hour. Occasional buses leave Mochit (Northern) Bus Station. From Bangkok, it takes 4–5 hours to get to Chanthaburi. Buses can also be caught in neighboring Rayong (2–3 hours) and Trat (45 minutes).
Minibuses regularly leave Victory Monument in Bangkok for Chanthaburi.

From Cambodia you have three choices to get to Chanthaburi. You can take the southern crossing through Trat at Hat Lek/Koh Kong, or one of the two northern crossings at Ban Pakard/Phsa Phrum or Ban Laem/Daun Lem. Neither one is regularly used by tourists. We had no trouble crossing at Ban Pakard, but were ripped off by the Cambodian border guard at Hat Lek who insisted that we pay $5 more each than the official visa fee.

Don't believe touts claiming you must pay an exorbitant rate for a taxi to Chanthaburi Town. There are minivans on the Thailand side at both crossings waiting to whisk you along on your travels.

Getting Around

Chanthaburi isn't yet a major tourist destination, so your choices of transport aren't as obvious as in neighboring beach towns or in Bangkok. However, you'll still find plenty of motorcycle taxis, mini-vans, Songthaews, and buses to help you get around.

Motorcycle taxis, taxis, and songthaews can be picked up at Nam Phuu Market, the Robinson shopping complex, the bus station and Wat Kate Na Boonyaram. You won't find the bubble gum pink taxis characteristic of Bangkok. Taxis in Chanthaburi are pickup trucks that usually have the word TAXI printed somewhere on the side. They're known as Maz-sa-das. Taxis are two colors, usually yellow and blue or red and blue, as opposed to Songthaews, which are one color.

Pick up a minivan to any of the local provinces at the Fountain Plaza near Nam Phuu Market or the Bus Station.

Renting motorcycles and bicycles is a possibility, although it's not easy to find places that rent. Ask your hotel to help you. The River Guesthouse in Chanthaburi Town or Siri Guesthouse in Laem Singh can arrange either motorbikes or bicycles. Motorbikes typically cost 300 baht/day and bicycles 50 baht/day.

Where to Stay

The beach towns of Laem Sing and Chao Lao are popular places to stay, but there are a few worth mentioning in Chanthaburi Town. Most are clustered along Gems Street (Si Chan Road) in the Old City.

If you are coming for the Durian Festival, remember to book early, as hotels do tend to fill up. Weekends can also be busy when gem merchants come to town.

Muang Chan Hotel: 257-259 Sri Chan Road
River Guest House: 3/5-8 Sri Chant Road, Tel: 03 9328211
Gem's Club Hotel: 68 Sri Chan Road, Tel: 03 9311599,
Kasemsarn Hotel: 98/1 Benchamarachutit Rd., T. Watmai, Tel: +66 39 311 100
Website
KP Grand Hotel: 35/200-201 Treerat Rd., Tel: 03 932320

Hot Tip: Pong Nam Ron Hot Springs
Take a dip in either of these two small geothermally-heated ponds surrounded by durian and longan orchards. Temperature is estimated at 36-39°C (96.8-102.2°F). The Hot Springs are open daily 6:00 am to 6:00 pm and located on Namron Road, off Highway 3193 near Wat Pong Nam Ron.

Fruitless Things To Do
For more ideas, check out Chanthaburi Blog about living in and cycling around Chanthaburi. If temples are your thing, look no further.

In Chanthaburi Town

King Taksin Lake Park is the best place to exercise or take a break from the chaos of downtown Chanthaburi. The island in the middle of the lake has a large selection of exercise equipment and single-exercise stations ring the trail around the lake, too. You’ll have plenty of company in the mornings and evenings, when Chanthaburi’s health-conscious joggers and walkers emerge.

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception is the largest catholic cathedral in Thailand, built in 1909 in the traditional gothic style.

Gems Market Pick up some gemstones as a souvenir at any of the small shops lining Gems Street or enjoy the hustle and bustle of the weekend gem market.

Check out a local temple

Wat Mai is near to the Lake Park, on Tha Chalaep Road. It is a beautiful gold-adorned temple built in classic Thai Mahayana Buddhist style.

Wat Phai Lom is a short walk from the River Guesthouse or the KP Grand Hotel on the river. It is a whitewashed, unassuming temple built during the Ayutthaya period that houses some impressive murals. You can still get a massage here from monks trained in the art.

Wat Kate Na Boonyaram is an impressive temple on Gems Street (Sri Chan) between the Gems Club Hotel and the Post Office. The temple hosts a Vegetarian Festival in October.

Go trekking or camping

Khao Kitchakut National Park is located 30 km north of Chanthaburi Town on Route 3249, adjacent to Khao Soi Dao Wildlife Sanctuary located 70 km north of Chanthaburi Town on NH 317. There you’ll find modest accommodations and camping areas.
Khao Laem Sing Forest Park (Laem Sing District) is a protected forest area on the tip of the peninsula at the mouth of the Chanthaburi River.

Namtok Phliu National Park (Laem Sing District) is only 6 km south of Chanthaburi Town and is a nice day trip to the waterfalls.

Khao Chamao-Khao Wong National Park (Kaeng Hang Maeo District) is 70 km to the northeast of Chanthaburi Town, on the border with Rayong. Durian pa can be found here.

Go Snorkeling off the island of Koh Chula or Koh Nom Sao, accessible from Laem Sadet Beach.

Chill at a Beach

Ao Yang Beach (Laem-Sing District)
Hat Khung Wiman Beach (Na Yai Am District)
Hat Chao Lao Beach (Tha Mai District)
Hat Laem-Sadet Khung Kraben (Tha Mai District)
Laem Sadet–Ao Khung Kraben (Tha Mai District)

Random Local Attractions

The Pyramid A stupa built by King Rama V in 1881, in a pyramid-style in memory of his beloved queen who drowned in the Chao Phraya River in a boat accident, contains some parts of her ashes.

King Taksin Shipyard and Naval Museum A mildly amusing collection of paraphernalia from the wreckage of a ship sunk around 1807.

Oasis Sea World (Laem Sing District, [Website] Here you can watch a dolphin show and even swim with dolphins. Most reviews of this place say that the staff is well-trained and the dolphins seem well cared for, but if exploitation of these highly intelligent creatures makes you uncomfortable, save your baht for other activities.

Khung Kraben Bay is a conservation project to protect the coastal mangroves. Wander the boardwalks and nature trails, or check out the small aquarium.
RAYONG

Production: 72,881 tonnes per year

Rayong Town is a coastal city located far enough away from the beach that most people bypass this unattractive modern city for the smaller beach towns like Ban Phe where they can get a ferry to the tropical paradises of Koh Samet and its neighboring islands.

Thanks to its proximity to Bangkok and the popular beaches at Pattaya, Rayong is better prepared for tourists than neighboring Chanthaburi and combines the best of both. The government Tourism Office (TAT) is quite active, helping tourists to easily explore Rayong’s long tranquil beaches, hilly forest areas spattered with waterfalls, and plethora of durian orchards.

Here you’ll find more durian orchards set up to accommodate the agrotourist, from small homestays and fruit tours to the slightly cheesy, theme-park-like Supatra Land Farms, which draws busloads of visitors from Hong Kong and China and is worth the trip just to gawk.

Skip to Rayong Map
**Highlights**

- Join the crowds at a horticultural theme park.
- Stay overnight in a durian orchard.
- Pedal up an appetite on an orchard bicycling route

**Durians to Look For**

Although less diverse than Chanthaburi, the pickings are still good in Rayong. Here you'll find the standard **Monthong**, and **Chanee** along with better-priced **Ganyao** and a few oddballs like **Nockayib** and **Puangmanee**.

**Rayong Fruit Festival**

Rayong city celebrates an annual fruit festival at Taphong Fruit Market with a parade, beauty contest and fruit contest held the last week of May. Check our [Festival Page](#) for this year's dates.

**Markets**
1. **Taphong Fruit Market** is the largest durian market in Rayong. Comprising both a covered market full of fried snacks and other processed goods and two large parking lots where durian and other fruit vendors sell from the back of pickup trucks. This is your best chance to find diverse types of durian as well as the best prices. The market is located on Sukhumvit Road (NH 3) about 9 km east of Rayong, directly across from the TAT office. **Note:** Google Map has placed this market in the wrong location. I’ve placed a marker in the correct spot.

2. **Rayong Central Market** This small indoor market is worth a miss, especially if you are a vegetarian or squeamish about odors. While all the typical Thai fruits are available here, the selection is small and the atmosphere unenthralling. It’s a good place to grab a coconut and leave.

3. **Ban Phe Wet Market** Not to be confused with the cluster of souvenir shops along the pier, the Ban Phe Wet Market is a small covered market where you can buy vegetables, a small selection of fruits, and cheap Thai food. **Note:** Ban Phe Market is a tourist trap on the pier with no durian or durian products in sight. This market is good for souvenirs and snacks of the fried variety. Occasionally a vendor balancing fruit in buckets will pass through, but don’t count on it.

**Orchards and Homestays**
1. **Supatra Land Farm** (70 Moo 10, Tambon Nong Lalok, Ban Khai District, Tel: 03 88920489, [Website](#)) A low-key theme park set in an orchard, Supatra Land farm is both hokey and fun. A motorized tram transports busloads of Chinese tourists and you through this huge expanse of orchards, stopping at designated spots to sample the fruit. Read more about our trip here.

2. **Suan Ban Rao** (Baan Num Jhone 1 Baanbung-Klaeng Road, Tambon Krasae Bon Klaeng District Rayong. Tel: 081 8044169. Email: kajohnpu@hotmail.com [Website](#), [Facebook](#)) A durian and fruit orchard that claims 109 varieties of durian, listed on their website. Mostly they sell Monthong, Chanee, and Ganyao. In addition there is rambutan, mangosteen, longkong and longan.

3. **Lung Serm Plantation** (Wat Yang Gnam, Klaeng District, Tel: 081 3537855 [Facebook](#)) A durian orchard that, in addition to the normal Monthong, Puangmanee, and Ganyao, features some unique varieties like Nualthong or the much sought after Thong Kamon. This last durian sells for 1,000 baht per fruit! Visitors may reserve durian feasts or individual fruits for purchase by calling beforehand. No accommodations.

4. **Suan Kun Pichai** (101/2 Moo 4 Sakkhone Klaeng District, Tel: 03 8669894 / 081 3537855, [Website](#)) This fruit orchard is open to the public for tour, fruit buffet, or lunch. Call in advance.

5. **Suan Lung Tong Bai** (96/1 Mu 11 Tambon Mueang Rayong, Tel: 083 7696172 / 089 8106411) A little bit touristy, this fruit garden offers tours by miniature train. Price for the fruit buffet is 200 baht per person. For accommodations they recommend nearby Pa Somjit Homestay (0892447544).

6. **Suan Yai Da** (30 Moo 3, Khao Yai Da Tambon Taphong, Tel: 089 0991297 / 089 0431330 / 03 8664369, [Website](#)) A 30-acre durian and other fruit orchard that offers fruit buffets for 200 baht per person. Two rooms are available, one that can accommodate up to 10 people for 2000 baht or one that can accommodate up to 4 persons for 1000 baht.

7. **Pan An Homestay and Orchard** (60 Moo 3, Taphong District, Tel: 03 8664477 / 081 3009518) This homestay offers orchard tours and fruit buffets of durian, rambutan, mangosteen, salacca, and longkong. An orchard tour and fruit tasting costs 200 baht/person. Homestay is 400 baht with capacity for 50 people. It’s a stop on the Taphong Bike Trail.

8. **Suan Lamduan** (78 Moo 14, Taphong District, Tel: 089 9333798) This durian, rambutan, and mangosteen farm offers a fruit buffet for 200 baht. They grow Monthong and Chanee durians. No accommodations available.

9. **Suan Khun Noi** (35 Charoen Suk Road, Wang Wa District, Tel: 081 9404384 / 089 0255259) This orchard offers durian, rambutan and mangosteen fruit buffets for 200 baht/person. For an extra 80 baht, they’ll cook you a full meal.

10. **Suan Phaibun** (21 Moo 4, Tambon Na Ta Khwan, Tel. 089 5357008 / 081 567 6368, [Website](#), [Contact](#), [Facebook](#)) This mixed orchard offers a good spread of durian varieties in addition to rambutan, longan, and a 200-year-old mangosteen. Durians include Monthong, Chanee, Ganyao, Nockayib, and one of the durian from Laplae. They
don’t currently offer accommodations, although they have plans to do so in the future. They suggest visitors stay at a nearby resort. Call for more information.

11. **Suan Phuyai Somkhuan** (Moo 3, Tambon Ban Laeng, Tel: 081 7619497/ 081 9913233) A fruit buffet and orchard that offers Monthong and Chanee durians, mangosteen, rambutans, longans, and salak. They recommend visitors stay on nearby Mae Ramphueng Beach.

### Getting There

Rayong is accessible by air at **U-Tapao International Airport** on the border with Chonburi, which serves various domestic and international carriers.

**Buses** depart Ekamai Station in Bangkok for Rayong town or Ban Phe, taking approximately 3 hours to arrive. Be sure to specify where you would like to go before getting on board. Buses and minivans also depart from Chanthaburi Bus Station (2–3 hours) and Pattaya.

The closest **train station** to Rayong is Ban Phlu Ta Luang, in the southern tip of the Chonburi province, near the border to Rayong. Trains run irregularly.

### Getting Around
Motorcycle taxis and songthaews run regularly between Rayong town and Ban Phe, but if you want to explore the interior regions it's best to rent a motorbike at your guesthouse for ~200 baht/day.

**Where to Stay**

Accommodations to suit any budget are easiest to find in Ban Phe, but there are plenty of hotels in Rayong Town and the neighboring beaches as well. If you need to get away from the crowds, head to any of the orchard homestays, which are actually more plentiful in Rayong than in Chanthaburi despite there being less overall durian. The National Park allows camping.

[See a map and hotel listing for Ban Phe.](#)
The Rayong Tourism Office has organized three bicycle routes through the orchards that start and end at the TAT Office near the Taphong Fruit Market (153/29 Moo 12 Sukumvit Road, see Rayong Map). Call 03 8664053 to arrange a guided trip or venture into the backroads on your own. The office does not provide bicycles, so bring your own or ask your hotel where you can rent one. We’ve had this map translated into English, but you can view the original by going to http://www.tapong.go.th/bi.html.

Fruitless Things To Do

Go snorkeling on Koh Samed or the protected islands Koh Man Nai, Koh Talu, or Koh Kudee

Chill at a beach
Hat Laem Charoen (Rayong District)
Sai Thong Beach (Rayong District)
Mae Ram Phueng Beach (Rayong District)
Phala Beach (Ban Chang District)
Laem Mae Phin (Klaeng District)

Go trekking
Khao Chamao - Khao Wong National Park on the border of Chanthaburi and Rayong. Keep an eye out for thurian pa (*Durio mansonii*), which can be found in some areas and is a food for wildlife.

Sopha Botanical Park is a 32-rai park dedicated to native Thai flora open daily from 9 am–4:30 pm, except on Thursday. There is a small admission fee.

Random Local Attractions
Rayong Aquarium is a small aquarium only 4 km from Ban Phe.
Koh Man Nai Turtle Restoration is an island dedicated to breeding endangered Hawksbill and Olive turtles. There are no regular ferries to the island, but many tour agencies run day trips.
TRAT

Production: 25,736 tonnes per year

The small province of Trat is squeezed between the mountains of Cambodia and the coast, where the hills drop off suddenly into a part of the Gulf of Thailand spattered with more than 52 islands and islets perfect for snorkeling, swimming, or just soaking up the sun.

While the mountains may beckon, you don't have to go far from the coast to get a good hit of the thorny fruit. Koh Chang, the second largest island in Thailand, and Trat's most popular tourism hotspot, is split nearly in half between developed white sand beaches and old durian orchards lining a serene coast. Said to be similar in climate to the famous durian island in Malaysia, Penang, Koh Chang boasts a unique flavor of durian thanks to the soil and sea air. A smaller island nearby, Koh Kud, also has durian.

On the mainland, Trat Town has developed as a resting point for travelers crossing overland into Cambodia or returning from a holiday on the islands. Few people actually stay more than a night or two before moving on, but there are a number of guesthouses and places to catch up on laundry, as well as a great fruit market where you can find true tropical delicacies like the cempedak. If you're there the second weekend in May, swing by the Trat Fruit Festival.
**Highlights**

- Share a durian with the elephants at an elephant camp.
- Get a whiff of fresh durian guan.
- Grab a durian on your way to swim at a waterfall.

**Durians to Look For**

*Chanee* is still the most popular durian variety in Trat. You may even have a difficult time finding Monthong. The major durian growing region on the mainland is Khaosaming District, a 30–45 minute drive from Chanthaburi Town. On Koh Chang, head to the east side or up the Khlong Son Valley.

**Trat Fruit Festival**

The Trat Fruit Festival is held the second or third weekend in May in Khaosaming District. A low-key event compared to the Chanthaburi Durian Festival, the fruit festival
features a parade and various contests. While not a durian festival, durian is sure to be prominently featured.

**Markets**

**Trat Central Market** A standard fruit and vegetable market, the central market encompasses several blocks around the main market building between Soi Sukhumvit and Tat Mai Alley.

**Trat Night Market** Located just a couple blocks north of Trat Central Market toward Sukhumvit Road, this typical afternoon and evening market hides goodies like cempedak and durian.
Orchards and Homestays

The majority of Trat’s durian orchards are in Kaosaming District, a 30–45 minute drive from Chanthaburi Town. Some are part of the Khao Saming Organic Agriculture Group, which can help organize homestays and tours (Contact 233/2 Moo 1 Khao Saming, Tel: 089932 8892). There are more durian orchards on Koh Chang.

1. Suan Pol Ampai (205 Moo 8 Thung Nonsi Khaosaming District, Tel: 081 6563841, 03 9537300, Facebook 1/ Facebook 2) This durian, rambutan, pineapple, banana, longkong, and mangosteen farm is open for tourists between 9 am and 5 pm every day of the season. No accommodations but can recommend homestays nearby. 100 baht per person for a fruit buffet.

2. Khun Paitoon Orchard (Moo 8 Thung Nonsi, Khao Saming District, Tel: 086 0060132) This durian, mangosteen, and rambutan farm set along a river offers tours and fruit buffets for 100 baht per person. No accommodations.

3. San Ruk Orchard (106 Moo 1 Tambon Khaosaming, Khaosaming District, Tel: 084 3624019) This durian farm offers fruit buffets and tours for 100 baht per person, and has accommodations for up to 20 people.

4. Non Boong Orchard, also known as Suan Tor Fun (2/1 Moo 8 Thung Nonsi, Khaosaming District, Tel: 086 3161865) This orchard offers mangosteen, longkong, and durian. Fruit buffets cost 100 baht per person, including access to a small petting zoo. They have plans to build a tree house homestay in the next few years, but currently don't offer accommodations.

5. Ton Palm Orchard (256/1 Moo 1, Tambon Khaosaming, Khaosaming District, Tel: 086 7948056 Facebook) You can purchase mangosteen and durian here, but they are not open for tours. No accommodations. Not shown on map.
Getting There

A small **airport** operated by Bangkok Airways serves travelers to Trat. A flight from Bangkok takes around 45 minutes.

**Buses** departing Ekamai Station (Eastern Terminal) in Bangkok for Trat take 5 hours, crossing through Rayong and Chanthaburi on the way. **Minivans** from Chanthaburi's Fountain Plaza take 45 minutes and drop you off in front of Trat Central Market.

There are no **trains** this far east.

From the Cambodian border crossing at **Hat Lek/Koh Kong** it’s a 1.5–2 hour drive by minivan to the Central Bus Station.

Getting Around

The songthaew system is easy to use, with frequent routes between Trat town, the Koh Chang ferry pier, and any of the beaches on the west side of the island. Songthaews very infrequently run to the east side, so it's best to have your own form of transportation, if you plan on visiting Koh Chang's durian orchards. Motorbikes can be rented at your guesthouse.
**Where To Stay**

Accommodations in Trat Town are easy to find, although there's not much reason to stay there. If you wish to stay near the mainland durian orchards, but not in a homestay, you can spend a night at the Khaosaming Hotel. If you have your own tent, you can stay at the Nam Tok Khlong Kaeo National Park. Accommodations are also available at Tan Khu Bay and Ban Chuen Beach.

**Fruitless Things To Do**

There's not too much to do in Trat, which is why most people come here just to recover from other travels and do nothing but enjoy the vibe of a small Thai town. For more fruitless activities, follow the tourist crowd and head to Koh Chang. Follow this link for more ideas for [where to stay and what to do in Trat](#).

**Check out a local temple**

- **Wat Buppharam (Wat Plai Klong)** was built in 1652 and is the oldest temple in Trat. It is located at Moo 3 of Tambon Wangkrachae, 2 km from downtown Trat.
- **Wat Yothanimit (Wat Bot)** located near the reservoir is the only royal temple in Trat.
- **Wat Muang Kao Saen Tum** is located about 40 km from Khao Saming town and is famous for its dark brown stones that sound like bells when knocked.

**Go trekking or camping**

- **Nam Tok Khlong Kaeo National Park** is located on the border of Cambodia. Bring your own tent and camping supplies.

**Chill at a Beach**

- **Tub Tim Beach** (Trat District)
- **Baan Chuen Beach** (Khlong Yai District)
- **Muk Kaew Beach** (Khlong Yai District)
- **Ratchakarun Beach** (Khlong Yai District)
- **Sai Ngam Beach** (Khlong Yai District)
- **Tan Khu Bay** (Laem Ngop District)

**Go Snorkeling** off Koh Chang or Koh Kud.

**Random Local Attractions**

- Check out the **Gems Markets** in Bo Rai, Nong Bon. and Sra Yai villages.
- Rent a bicycle and take a 10 km loop of the nearby reservoir just east of town.
- Get a cheap massage at the local **Thai Massage School** on Rathanusorn Road.
KOH CHANG

Beaches, bikinis, and touristy resorts populate the heavily developed west side, in sharp contrast to the solace of the east's rocky coast. You'll have an easy time finding durian here because durian orchards rim the main road and every convenience store is busy making huge vats of *thurian guan*, filling the air with the rich aroma of warm durian. After you've had your fill of fresh durian, buy some freshly made guan to take home.

Read about our amazing trip to Koh Chang.
Orchards

1. **Suan Khun Puu** (Contact Noon at Tel: 085 064 6030  pknun_3@hotmail.com or Nes 092 260 8517) Located just off the main highway across the street from the fuel station on the Rural Road, this large fruit farm adjacent to the coast will soon be transformed into an eco-tourism destination with plans for bungalows overlooking the ocean. Fruit tasting costs 200 baht/person, tour only 50 baht/person. Currently there are no accommodations available.
2. **Keereebanchara Garden** (Moo 2, Ban Dan Mai, Koh chang, Tel 089 9394308) This eco-friendly garden strives to educate visitors about a variety of Thai fruits. There are no accommodations.

3. **Boon Sri Orchard** (76/2 Moo 5 Koh Chang Tai, Tel: 08 61510442) This durian, longkong, and mangosteen orchard is located near Chang Noi Restaurant. There are no accommodations.

4. **Look Chang Orchard** (15/4 Moo 1 Koh Chang, Tel: 08 24529191) This orchard offers a fruit buffet of Chanee and Monthong. There are no accommodations. Not shown on map.

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**More Durian Fun on Koh Chang**

**Feeding Elephants** Koh Chang is home to a number of elephant camps, but **Ban Kwan Chang** is a special one. Besides being located at the end of a durian-lined valley, Ban Kwan Chang is actually a sanctuary supported by the Asian Elephant Foundation for retired circus and logging elephants. You can bathe the elephants, feed them durian, or take a morning ride through the nearby fruit farms.

[Watch a video of Lindsay feeding elephants durian at Ban Kwan Chang.](#)
Waterfalls

The east side is littered with cold, breathtaking waterfalls nestled into hillsides covered in durian orchards. Here are a few where you can take a dip while waiting for a durian to fall. The falls tend to run dry between December and April, but there's no durian then anyway.

Namtok Khlong Nonsi This multi-tiered waterfall is the first one you'll come to when driving down along the east coast toward Ban Sala. It is surrounded by durian orchards on all sides, and you must walk 300 meters through durian trees to get to the falls. The farmers ask for a parking fee, but you can park across the street at the restaurant for free. The restaurant makes and sells thurian guan. You can buy a durian at the restaurant, or try your luck for a freshly fallen one at the falls.

Keereebunchorn Orchard is located down the gravel path next to the restaurant, directly across from the trailhead to the falls.

Namtok Than Mayom To reach this waterfall, you have to pay to enter the National Park. The trail to the waterfall wanders through a small durian orchard, passing a shop where you can buy thurian guan. Although pretty, neither the waterfall nor the durian orchard is impressive when compared to the other falls. Save your baht for buying durian and head to one of the other falls, which are free to enter.

Namtok Khiripet The trailhead to this small waterfall is a pleasant, 2-km ride down a very new and scarcely used tarmac. The small parking lot is in the middle of a durian orchard and you have to cross through it to get to the falls, about a 10-minute walk. If you go early in the tourist season, like we did, the trail may be quite overgrown and difficult to discern. Just follow the sound of the water.

Namtok Klong Jao Leuam The trailhead to this isolated waterfall is about 500 meters past the elephant camp at the end of the road in Khlong Son Valley. Park at the restaurant where the road ends and pay the 20 baht fee to cross through their land.

Aside: Durian on Koh Kood

More remote and less developed than Koh Chang, Koh Kood is a small island dotted with resorts and small fruit orchards. It's a popular diving spot with sparkling white sand beaches, pristine coral reefs, and no nightlife at all. The largest town has only 300 people. Durian grows along the beach of Klong Hin Bay. To buy durian, try Kep's Shop on the Klong Chao main road.

Getting Around

The West side of the island is frequented by regular songthaew services and taxis, but the east side is not. To get there, hire a motorbike on the west side and drive there yourself.

Where to Stay

The west side of Koh Chang is easy to navigate as a tourist, but the durian orchards are on the less populated and relatively untouristed east side of the island. Currently, the
easiest thing to do is stay at one of the beaches on the west side and hire a motorbike to drive around to the other side, about a 45-minute drive. However, there are a growing number of options if you prefer to stay on the quiet side of the island. Here are just a few to consider.

**Amber Sands Beach Resort** (51/6 Moo 2 Dan Kao, Ko Chang, Tel: 39 586 177 [Website.](#))

**The Souk** ([Website.](#) Tel:81 553 3194)

**Suan Sam Chan** (43/2 Moo 2, Dan Kao, Ko Chang. Tel: 66 81 862 6061)

**Nah Koh Chang Tara Resort** (15/19 Moo 1 Koh Chang, Trat, Ko Chang, Tel:90 771 2348)

For more information about Koh Chang, check out the blog [I Am Koh Chang](#), the most comprehensive guide to the island we've found.

Jump back to beginning of **The East**
The North

Mountainous and cool, Northern Thailand has a different vibe than the party beaches and jungles of the lowland coastal areas. Northern Thailand has a distinct culture all its own, influenced by nearby Laos as well as the many tribal peoples who still retain a sense of their individual cultures.

Most tourists head to Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, or Pai in the far north for a taste of hill tribe culture and scenery. Durian doesn't grow that far north. Luckily the provinces of Sukhothai, Uttaradit, and, further to the east, Sisaket, have plenty of interest. Get off the beaten path and enjoy cooler temperatures, beautiful vistas and authentic Thai culture - all with a piece or three of durian.

Uttaradit

Sukhothai

Sisaket
UTTARADIT

Production: 10,930 tonnes per year

All tourists taking the overnight train from Bangkok to Chang Mai and Pai in the North pass through the province of Uttaradit, probably while they’re sleeping. So few tourists stop in this mountainous province that the *Lonely Planet* guidebooks fail to mention it.

Named the "Port of the North," Uttaradit was once a busy river trading town shuttling goods up and down the River Nan between the ancient city of Sukhothai and China. Nowadays Uttaradit is a laid-back, quiet region whose steep mountainsides, national parks, and crumbling temples, built when Sukhothai was the capital city of Thailand, are rarely enjoyed by visitors.

The main attraction for the durian tourist in Uttaradit is the Laplae Durian Festival held the first week of June in the nearby district of Laplae (sometimes spelled Lablae), about 10 km from Uttaradit Town. In Thai, “Laplae” translates as “The Hidden Place,” and this very quiet, mountainous corner of the province certainly seems to have remained hidden from general public awareness despite frequently being featured in the media for durian. Two varieties unique to Laplae have garnered attention in the last decade for having superior flavor and very little odor. They are the second most expensive durians in Thailand after Nonthaburi’s Ganyao.
If you're lucky, you'll also get to see the special way durian farmers transport their harvest across those terrifyingly steep mountain farms. Some have rigged up a clever pulley system involving ziplines stretched across the deep gulleys, ferrying baskets of durian through the air to waiting trucks on the other side. The baskets often weigh up to 60 kilos—if you're small, fancy a ride?

Skip to Uttaradit Map

**Highlights**

- Try a durian pounded salad (som tam).
- Help transport durian by pulley system across the valleys.
- Taste Laplae's unique durian varieties.

**Durians To Look For**

The Linlaplae and the Longlaplae durians are unique in that they have very little odor. The Linlaplae is especially distinctive. It has six lobes that are so pronounced that it looks like a daisy when viewed from above. It is prohibitively expensive. Not only does
the fruit cost as much as 800 baht/kilo, its small size and extremely pronounced lobes means that all too often there is very little or even no edible portion at all. Despite this minor defect, it is considered by locals to be superior in flavor to the Longlaplae, which sells for about half the price, is slightly larger, and reliably carries something to eat.

See Durian Field Guide for more details about the Longlaplae and Linlaplae durians.

Durian Festival

The Durian Festival in Laplae, Uttaradit is a big deal for this small, rural town. The focus is supposedly on durian, but the event has a carny vibe replete with bounce houses, inflatable slides, carnival games, and cotton candy. Don't miss the opening ceremony and ensuing Dancing Durian Som Tam Competition. Each group gets judged on most enthusiastic dance and band, best tasting salad, and best artistic presentation.

Afterward guests travel from table to table tasting each salad for themselves. If you're sensitive to hot spices or still have taste buds, put a check on how many chillies are pounded into your salad.

Read about our visit to the Laplae Durian Festival.
Tip for Vegetarians  Som tam usually has soft shelled crab, shrimp, and fish sauce. If you’re a vegetarian, the magic words to make sure you receive a vegetarian version are *mai nam pla* (no fish sauce) and *mai goong*, (no shrimp) followed by a smile. Som tam is frequently made on street carts where all of the ingredients are visible. Pointing to each item you don’t want and shaking your head works just as well.

Markets

1. Sri Phanommas Municipal Market  There is a small fruit and vegetable market in the middle of Laplae Town just behind the 7-11 and the Phra Sri Phanommas Monument.

2. Laplae Durian Market  spans both sides of Khao Nam Tok Road for 150 meters near the fairgrounds where the Durian Festival is held. There is also a small wet market tucked slightly off the road.

3. Mae Phun Central Market  is just off of Khao Nam Tok Road and around the corner from the row of stalls selling durian, here you can find many other types of fruit as well as men throwing small steel balls in a game called *Petanque*.

4. Uttaradit Market  Only a few blocks from the train station, the Uttaradit market has a great selection of most of the fruits available in Thailand.

Orchards and Homestays
There are many durian farms, but none are set up for tourist visits. This doesn't mean you can't go, it just means that when you visit a durian orchard in Laplae you are getting a unique and personal experience. See Local Durian Guides for help arranging your trip.

1. Ban Bon Doi Homestay (77 Moo 2, Tambon Maephun, Lablae District. Tel: 055 427136 /055 457270. Email: banbondoi.shop@gmail.com, Website) This homestay is very close to the festival grounds. They grow durian, mangosteen, longsat, and longkong.

2. Hat Song Khwae Homestay (52 Moo 1, Tambon Hat Song Khwae, Tron District. Contact Khun Por 082 5048843, Website) This homestay is located in the durian growing region of Tron District, nearby Laplae. They are a tour agency that organizes tours to neighboring farms.

3. Ban Suan Luang Rit (24/4 Moo 8 Huai Tai Maephun District, Tel: 892715766) A durian farm near Julian’s house (See Local Durian Guides). They do not speak much English, so contact one of the guides for assistance arranging your trip. Not shown on map.

4. Suan Ban Dara (41/1 Moo 8 Huai Tai. Tambon Maephun, Laplae. Tel: 89 9568934) Bradit Sonpeng is the owner of a good-sized orchard with 30 mature durian trees and more young durian and longkong trees. He speaks some English and is happy to give visitors a tour.

Local Durian Guides

Uttaradit, and especially Laplae, is not really set up for tourists. It can be difficult to get around, so you may want to contact one of these people before you go.

New York Restaurant If arriving by bus, stop here to get your bearings. Located between the Bus Station and the Tesco Lotus, the New York Restaurant serves a mixture of American and German food. More importantly, the owner speaks English, is friendly with tourists, and can help arrange transportation or accommodations.

Dtew’s Fruit Tours (082 2286711, panatpt@windowslive.com) Ms. Panachakorn Piengta (nickname Dtew) offers tours of local fruit farms and of her 22-rai herb farm.

Julian Originally from Germany, Julian has been living in Laplae with his Thai wife for 7 years. He is fluent in Thai and quite knowledgeable about local culture. He offers incredible insight into the Thai way of thinking and will definitely help you improve your Thai manners. He owns a small farm with mango and durian trees and has many friends who own producing durian farms. Contact him in advance to arrange tours to durian farms and into the mountains. Email a.j.steffen@gmx.de.

TAT Phrae Office Tours can also be arranged through the Tourism Authority of Thailand Office in neighboring Phrae, which oversees tourism activities in Uttaradit. Contact tatphrae@gmail.com.
Getting There

The closest airport is in neighboring Sukhothai.

**Uttaradit Railway Station** is located near the center of town and serves trains running from Bangkok to Chiang Mai on the Northern Line. Assuming the trains run on time (they won't), Uttaradit is 5–6 hours from Chiang Mai and 7–10 hours from Bangkok. This is best done overnight.

**Uttaradit Bus Station** is located about 2 km from the Railway Station. It is served by multiple bus companies running from Chiang Mai to Bangkok. By bus Uttaradit is 3 hours from Chiang Mai and 9 hours from Bangkok.

**Getting Around**

Uttaradit doesn't see many visitors, and Laplae sees even fewer. In this small, rural corner of Thailand you won't find many motorcycle taxis, or for that matter, taxis. The only form of transport in Laplae are Songtheaws or previously arranged rides in casual, car-turned-taxis. Bringing your own form of transportation would be a good idea.

**Where to Stay**
Uttaradit has plenty of budget hotels around the train station, but accommodations in Laplae are few and far between. Below are a few options.

**Na Laplae Resort** (055-431-137 / 082-661-0881)
Standard: 500 baht/night

**The Room** (055-413-456)
Standard: 400 baht/night

**Camping at Julian's Orchard** Julian offers limited campsites on his riverside farm. Contact him well in advance. Not shown on map.

The **National Parks** Phu Soi Dao National Park, Khlong Tron National Park, and Lam Nan National Park also allow camping. Bring your own tent and supplies.

**Fruitless Things To Do**

**Check out a temple**
- **Wat Tha Thanon**, located across the street from the Uttaradit Railway Station, hosts an important Buddha statue.
- **Wat Sao Hin** is in downtown Laplae near the 7-11 on Sri Pra Nom Mas Road.
- **Wat Phra Borommathat** is located 3 km from Uttaradit on Hwy 102, and is the site of an annual Buddhist ceremony called “Atthami Puja” in June re-enacting the death and cremation of the Buddha.
- **Wat Don Chai** is at the intersection of Don Sai Road in Laplae.
- **Wat Donsak** is located in Moo 3, Tambon Failuang in Laplae District.
- **Wat Mon Prang** is on Ras Bam Rung Road in Laplae.
- **Mon Taat Meditational Practice Center** is located near the stadium on Mon Tad Road in Laplae.

**Go Trekking or Camping**
- **Khlong Tron National Park** is near Phu Soi Dao National Park in Nam Pad District, 70 km from Uttaradit Town.
- **Lam Nam Nan National Park**, located in Tha Pla District, is the source of the Nan River.
- **Phu Soi Dao National Park** is in the high peaks of the Luang Prabang Mountain on the border of Laos.

**Other Local Attractions**
- **Ton Sak Yai (Big Tree) Forest Park** near Pho Soi Dao National Park claims the largest teak tree in the world. The giant measures nearly 10 meters in circumference and is thought to be 1500 years old.
- **Laplae Museum** is located near the Gate to Laplae Town.
- **Mae Phun Waterfall** is a popular spot for locals and a great place to grab some lunch at any of the nearby food stalls and restaurants.
The **largest Namphi sword in the world** is at the Red Cross Office in Uttaradit. It measures 9.24 meters long and weighs 450 kg.

**Sirikit Dam** in Tha Pla District is a popular spot for boating, fishing, and getting a view.
SUKHOTHAI
Production: 4,650 tonnes per year

This ancient Thai capital city and popular tourist destination bumps up against the durian-growing region in neighboring Uttaradit. A small but significant amount of durian is grown here as well, and it's an easy day trip from Laplae for those looking for cultural activities. Sukhothai, which means “Dawn of Happiness” in Thai, was a major mecca for creative thought and innovation in the 13th century, the biggest development being the Thai written alphabet. The best way to see the ruins of the ancient city in the Sukhothai Historical Park is by bicycle, but to find durian orchards you’ll need a car. The majority of durian orchards can be found in the far northwestern corner in Si Satchanalai District, which borders Laplae District in Uttaradit.

Ban Na Ton Chan Village (111 Moo5, Tambon Ban Tuek, Si Satchanalai District, Tel: 05 5677209/ 085 2715909 / 089 8852639) Twelve families in this small village invite visitors from around the world to take a peek into their daily lives and rituals. Visitors can give early morning alms to monks, learn to cook traditional Thai dishes, and wander freely through the
durian, Burmese grape and langsat orchards as well as visit the Elephant Conservation Center. For help arranging a tour contact TAT Sukhothai at tatsukho@tat.or.th (they speak English).

SISAKET

Production: 1,050 tonnes per year

Durian is a newcomer in this far flung province in the northeastern part of Thailand known as the Isan. The poorest region of Thailand, the Isan has remained largely agricultural and undeveloped, a quiet, sleepy area where the dominant language is Laotian, not Thai. Set on the flat, dry plain of Khorat Plateau, the land drops off dramatically into a cliff that forms a highly contested border with Cambodia. Crumbling ancient Khmer ruins dot the landscape. The Preah Vihear Temple—within sight just a few hundred meters on the Cambodian side—is said to surpass the splendor of Angkor Wat. In many ways, it’s a province that seems lost in time.

Except that now there is durian. Introduced in the 1990’s, the King of Fruit was embraced by farmers as a means to escaping the drudgery and low returns of farming vegetables and cattle feed. Durian is one of the most important economic crops in Sisaket, with shipments sent Chanthaburi by truck for sending abroad.
Virtually unknown only two decades ago, durian is a celebrated part of life in Sisaket. The Sisaket Durian and Rambutan Festival is the second largest durian festival in Thailand, after the Chanthaburi Durian Festival. While lacking the organization and durian-centric activities of Chanthaburi, the festival is a huge event filled with Isan food, music, dancing, and, of course, plenty of durian.

Skip to Sisaket Map

**Highlights**

- Attend the Sisaket Durian Festival.
- Stay a night at a Buddhist commune and orchard.
- Explore the Isan and appreciate the diversity of Thai culture.

**Durians to Look For**

Only Monthong is really cultivated, although a few Ganyao can be found here and there. Kantharalak District is the fruit basket of Sisaket, so head there to find it growing fresh.
**Durian Festival**

The Sisaket Durian Festival is a major event that takes place in mid-June every year. Set in a large field at the Agricultural College, the vendors are centered around an enormous stage with a 20-foot-tall durian backdrop where traditional dancers in full headdress dance from early in the morning until late at night. Two long aisles sell durians and rambutans, but the rest sell popular Isan snack foods.

Don't miss the somewhat bizarre opening ceremony when, amid puffs of theatric smoke, a remote-controlled doll dressed in native garb emerges from a giant durian and brings a tray of durian flesh to government officials.

**Markets**

**In Sisaket Town**

**Talad Rodfai** the main fresh market near the railway station has fresh fruits and vegetables.

**Nearby**

1. **Khun Han District Market** is another market in fruit-growing Khun Han.
2. **Kanthalarak District Market** in Kanthalarak will have the widest selection of fruits.
Orchards and Homestays

1. **Pankhun Homestay** (32/1 Ban Trakat, Tambon Trakat Kantharalak, Tel: 080 0178878 / 086 8738762, [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), Email: Tossapoon_Suwajan@hotmail.com, or Piyawajan_Suwajan@hotmail.com) This 180-rai no-spray orchard is set in the small, peaceful village close to Huai TaMai Reservoir, within walking distance to durian orchards. 500 bath/night, add 100 baht for all you can eat fruit out of the orchard. Free wi-fi and bicycle rental.

2. **Thodsaphon Plantation** (Moo 7 Ban Tamtarom, Tambon Trakat, Kantharalak, Tel: 08 3797 8856) 200 baht/person for entry to the orchard to eat fruit. No accommodations available.

3. **Thanakit Plantation** (222 Ban Sam Khilek Village, Tambon Phran, Khun Han District, Tel: 08 52057466, [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com)) This large-scale orchard exports durian to China, but is also open to visitors who wish to purchase fresh durian by the kilo. They have Monthong, Ganyao, Chanee, and Puangmanee, as well as four other fruits: mangosteens, rambutans, longkongs, and longans. There are no accommodations onsite, but visitors wishing to stay the night can stay at the family’s nearby hotel and homestay, the Pongsin Resort. (Tel: 088 3755199, [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com))

4. **Suan Onsi** (130 Moo 10, Ban Sam Khilek, Tambon Phran, Khun Han District, Tel: 06-857673351 for Mr. Onsi Phakawong) A durian orchard with Monthong, Chanee, and Kradumthong. Mr. Onsi is the leader of the durian grower’s group and can take visitors to see other farms in the area. From the Ban Sam Khilek school walk toward the four way intersection and turn right. Go straight 100 meters and turn right onto a concrete road. His house is the one with a dragonfruit on the wall. Map location is approximated. No accommodations.

5. **Lungserm Plantation** (53/2 Moo 8 Tambon Phran, Khun Han District Si Sa Ket, Tel: 08 72437118) A durian and rambutan orchard offering fruit buffets for 100 baht, grazing tours for 50 baht, or direct purchase. No accommodations available. Not shown on map.

6. **Srisa Asoke Community** (Moo 15 Tambon Krachaeng, Kantaralak, Tel: 045-635767 085 1696963) A Buddhist Commune based on agrarian principles, Srisa Asoke has 100 rais of fruit orchards including durian. The community survives by selling organic fertilizers and health supplements. They have a spa, sauna, and wellness center on the grounds and accommodations for guests. Guests are requested to abide by Buddhist principles while staying, including a vegetarian diet.

Local Durian Guides

**Silverqueen Travel** (1100 Kukan Road, T. Meangtai, Mueang Sisaket—near Bangkok Bank, Tel: 085 0177732 / 045 644028, Email: silverqueentravel@gmail.com) is a small tourism agency run by Ms. Ramida Nimkingrat. She can help arrange transportation and tours.
Getting There

The best way to get to Sisaket is by train. The Northeastern Line departs Bangkok's Hualamphong Station and arrives in Sisaket 7–8 hours later, a comfortable overnight trip.

Buses regularly leave Mo Chit Station (Northern Bus Terminal) in Bangkok for Sisaket, a 9-hour trip. The Sisaket Bus Terminal is on Kuang Heng Alley, 1.5 km from the Railway Station.

You can also fly into the airport in the neighboring province, Ubon Ratchathani, and take a bus from there.

Getting Around

Although the majority of Sisaket province is rural, the city itself is modern and fully equipped to handle the Thai tourist. You will find plenty of motorbike taxis, taxis, and songthaews at the train station or bus station. What you won't find are other farangs.

Where to Stay
There are plenty of nice hotels in Sisaket for a third of the price of what you would pay in Bangkok. Outside of the city, you have a few options to stay on orchards.

**Fruitless Things To Do**

**Check out a local temple**
- **Wat Maha Buddharam** in downtown Si Saket has an enormous Buddha statue built during the Khmer era.
- **Pra That Ruang Rong around 4 km from downtown Si Saket.**
- **Wat Pa Maha Chedi Kaew (Wat Lan Khuad or Temple of a Million Bottles)** This temple in Khun Han District, about 60 km south of Si Sa Ket Town, is constructed entirely out of glass bottles. Even the pictures on the walls are assembled from bottle caps.

**Explore some Khmer ruins**
- **Khao Phra Wihan National Park** (Kanthalarak District)
- **Tamnaksai Khmer Ruins** (Khun Han District)
- **Sra Kampaeng Noi Khmer Ruins** (Uthumporn Pisai District)
- **Sra Kampaeng Yai Khmer Ruins** (Uthumporn Pisai District)
- **Huay Tap Tan/Ban Prasart Khmer Ruins** (Huay Tap District)
- **Plang Ku Khmer Ruins** (Plang Ku District)
- **Ban Samor Khmer Ruins** (Plang Ku District)
- **Taleng Khmer Ruins** (Ku Khan District)

**Cool off at a waterfall**
- **Namtok Phu La-O** (Kantharalak District)
- **Namtok Samrong Kiat** (Khun Han District)
- **Namtok Huay Chan** (Khun Han District)

**Other Local Attractions**
- **Si Sa Ket Aquarium** The highlights of this small aquarium, opened in 2011, are the shark tunnel and traditional Thai fish spa.
- **Somdet Sri Nagarin Park** This 237-rai park, located in the Agricultural College, contains a zoo and botanical area. It is heavily planted with Lamduan, a fragrant flowering tree and is a popular place for joggers.

Jump to beginning of **The North**
The South

On the narrow strip of land south of Bangkok, straddled by the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea, the landscape changes. Limestone projections launch skyward through tangles of vines and jungle is being rapidly converted to oil palm and rubber tree plantations. Some of the longest white sand beaches in the world rim this isthmus, making southern Thailand a popular spot for European tourists escaping the winter doldrums.

Yet, despite Southern Thailand's reputation as a major tourist destination where anything can happen (and often does), the majority of the region remains agricultural and undeveloped. You don't have to go far from the party beaches to hit some pristine jungle, rustic villages, huge wilderness areas, and durian orchards. It's somewhere in these jungles that durian is thought to have evolved. It grows wild in backyards and forested areas, known as thurian baan or backyard durian.

Go for a trek in one of the national parks and you may even find different species of durian, fodder for exotic animals like elephant, langur, mouse deer, gaur, and Sumatran rhinoceros that call this place home. Enjoy a night or two at a village homestay, and then hit the beach. Although touristy, **Koh Phangan** and **Koh Samui** both grow durian and are worth a visit.
Chumphon
Surat Thani
Koh Phangan and Koh Samui
Nakhon Si Thammarat
Phuket and Phang-Nga
Yala and Narathiwat
CHUMPHON
Production: 127,046 tonnes per year

The Gateway to Southern Thailand, Chumphon is an elongated province with 137 miles of beautiful white sand beaches, most of them overlooked by tourists making a beeline to the islands of Koh Tao, Koh Samui, and Koh Phangan. A few laid-back, cheap hotels can be found in town and on a few of the beaches, making it a great getaway for those seeking a respite from hype of the islands.

More importantly to the dedicated durian traveler, Chumphon is the second largest producer of durian in Thailand, even beating out the durian-famous province of Rayong. Like Chanthaburi, here you will find large warehouses bursting with durian and factories prepping durians for export to durian lovers worldwide. Prices are some of the lowest for durian of anywhere in Thailand. Even the famed Ganyao can be bought for a relative pittance. Enjoy the natural parks and beaches, and the abundance of Chumphon.

Skip to Chumphon Map.
**Highlights**

- Enjoy cheap and plentiful durian
- Go white water rafting through durian orchards.
- Spend the night in a durian orchard.

**Durians to Look For**

The majority of durian grown in Chumphon is Monthong, thanks to the predominant export industry. Chanee and Ganyao are also common, but you need to head to one of the organic durian orchards to find durian ban more than 100 years old.

**Durian Festival**

Lang Suan Durian Festival is held in August. Check the Events page at [www.yearofthedurian.com](http://www.yearofthedurian.com) for this year's dates.

**Hot Tip:** River rafting on bamboo rafts is a popular activity on the Lang Suan River. The river winds through fruit orchards. Contact a tour agency for more info.
Markets

In Town

**Chumphon Morning Market** is located between Pracha Uthit Road and Poramin Manka Road. This market sees the most action before 10 am. During the season, the market is surrounded by trucks piled high with durian and other fruits.

**Chumphon Night Market** is located on Krom Luang Road just a short walk from the Railway Station. This market is mostly a conglomeration of food stalls, but fruits and veggies are also available. To find durian, head to the side farthest away from the train station.

Nearby

1. **Auy Chai Market** (Lang Suan District) This major durian distribution center spans the highway and parking lots in front of the Auy Chai Grand Hotel for 200 meters on each side. Behind the hotel are several more long rows of durian stalls, each packing trucks full of durian to take to Chanthaburi or Bangkok for shipping abroad. It's an exciting, durian-filled atmosphere with some of the lowest prices you'll find in Thailand. [Read about the two days we spent eating durian here.](#)

2. **Por Tor Hin Chang Market** (Tha Sae district) This bustling early morning market on Phetkasem Road around Km. 453, near the Por Tor Hin Chang Temple, is usually surrounded by trucks piled high with seasonal fruits like pineapple, rambutan, and durian.
Orchards and Homestays

1. Lung Nin Garden (14 Moo 6, Charoensin Road, Tambon Chong Mai Kaeo, Thung Tako District, Tel: 081 5869595 / 087 9142142, Facebook, Website. Ask for Mr. Wannapatson) This organic durian plantation and homestay is 600 baht/night, and you are welcome to eat all the fruit you care for.
2. **Klong Rua Homestay** *(Website)* Actually located just over the border in Ranong in Namtok Ngao National Park, this unique village homestay is most easily accessed from Pha To in Chumphon. Getting there takes some effort, as the roads are poor and require four-wheel-drive. Nestled in the jungle, the village is off the grid and offers tourists a glimpse of an ancient way of life. Here you can venture into the forest to find wild durian species and horrible smelling flowers. The giant Rafflesia is both the largest flower in the world and is said to smell like a decaying corpse. You can also explore the fruit orchards around the village.

3. **Wang Tako Community** *(Wang Tako Sub-district, Lang Suan District, Contact Mr. Pravit Bhumiravi, chief of the community, Tel: 084 8388136)* When villagers in the Lang Suan river basin found their traditional way of life threatened by pollution and forest destruction, they decided to take steps to create a more ecologically sound agricultural system. The community of 13 villages now encourages the use of organic fertilizers, interplanting crops in established monocultures, and planting trees. Visitors can visit the Self-Sufficiency Learning Center and ask about purchasing fruits.

4. **Suan Nai Dum** *(Hwy 41, 54 km from Thung Tako Website)* This quirky fruit farm, growing tangerine, papaya, dragon fruit, and marian plum, is a popular rest stop for those traveling along the north-south highway. It doesn’t have durian, but what makes it special is that it has won awards for the quality of its unusual toilets. Make sure to read the website in google translate for a good laugh.

**Getting There**

**Chumphon Airport** serves flights from Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi International Airport as well as Ranong and Koh Samui Airports.

**Chumphon Railway Station** is served by trains running from Bangkok to Malaysia along the Southern Rail Line. If you are going to any of the islands you can purchase your ferry ticket at the train station.

Getting to Chumphon by **bus** can be a little tricky, as the Chumphon Central Bus Station is located outside of town, around 15 km south on Hwy 41. There are no songthaews running from the station to town, so you will have to arrange your own transportation with a taxi or motorbike.

A much easier option is to use the private bus companies Chokeanan Tour or Suwannatee Tour, which also stop at the Central Bus Station, but continue to pick up points in town.

**Minivans** leave from multiple places around the city, including directly from the train station, the minibus terminal off Krum Liang Road near the train station, or from Tatapao Road near the Farang Bar.

**Ferries** from Koh Tao and Koh Samui arrive at different piers depending on the company. The most popular ferry, the Lomprayah High Speed Catamaran, docks at Thung Makham Noi Pier (also known as Tummakam Pier), about 20 km south of Chumphon.

**Getting Around**
Local public buses running from Sawi north to Lang Suan can be caught in front of the Chumphon Central Market on Tha Taphao Road. Local songthaews, motorcycle taxis, and regular taxis can be caught at the train station. Since Chumphon is not a highly touristed area, it may not always be clear how to use public transportation. If you are planning on adventuring much in Chumphon, rent a car or a motorbike.

Where to Stay

Chumphon city offers a number of places to stay near the train station, the most famous backpacker spot being Farang Bar. Outside of Chumphon, most towns offer basic accommodations, but don't expect an English-speaking host. Several beaches north and south of Chumphon have resorts, the most developed being Hat Thung Wua Laen. Mu Ko Chumphon National Park offers bungalows and dormitory-style accommodations, as well as campgrounds.

Worth mentioning is the Auy Chai Grand Hotel (Website) located on the highway just across from the big durian market in Lang Suan. This upscale hotel offers spacious rooms with king size beds and flat screen televisions for only 600 baht/night. Trucks full of durian park in the parking lot in front and behind the hotel.

Fruitless Things to Do

Go White Water Rafting through the fruit orchards of the Lang Suan River.
Go Diving at Ao Yai Ai Beach or on Koh Khai or Ko Samet Island—not to be confused with Koh Samet in Rayong.

Chill On a Beach
  Ao Thung Makham (Chumphon District)
  Hat Sairee (Chumphon District)
  Hat Pardorn (Chumphon District)
  Arunothai Beach (Amphoe Thung Tako)
  Kho Khao Beach (Lang Suan District)
  Hat Thung Wua Laen (Pathio District)
  Hat Tham Thong - Bang Boet (Pathio District)
  Ao Bo Mao Bay (Pathio District)

Go Camping or Hiking
  Khao Phang Forest Park is located 12 km south of Chumphon Town on Hwy 4.
  Mo Ku Chumphon National Park Only 23 km north of Chumphon Town, the national park extends 77 km along the coast and back into the limestone hills.

Random Local Attractions
  The National Museum of Chumphon
SURAT THANI

Production: 30,588 tonnes per year

A transit center for tourists going to and coming from the popular islands of Koh Samui, Koh Phangan, and Ko Tao, few people bother to explore Surat Thani (often shortened to Surat). The largest province in Southern Thailand, Surat Thani stretches across the mountain range nearly to the Andaman Sea, encapsulating no less than six national parks and a number of wildlife sanctuaries where elephants, gaurds, mouse deers, gibbons, and hornbills still munch on wild durian species.

If trekking in the jungle isn't your thing, then unfortunately, mainland Surat Thani doesn't offer a lot to interest the durian tourist. Though the province is one of the more significant durian producing regions, here durian is overshadowed by a hairy red or yellow fruit called rambutan (ngo rongrian). Surat is a major producer of rambutan, even exporting the fruits to India. Durian can be found on display at the Rambutan and Other Fruits Festival put on every August, but it's just not quite the same when durian isn't the star of the show.

Those who do want to combine some beach fun with durian can find what they're looking for on Koh Samui and Koh Phangan. Both islands grow a small amount of durian. Koh Samui, being larger, grows more in its mountainous interior.
Skip to **Surat Thani Map**

### Highlights

- Go for a hike in Khoa Sok National Park to find other durian species.
- Share durian with the elephants.
- Bask in the paradise of tropical islands that grow durian.

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**Durians to Look For**

Monthong is the most prevalent durian variety, but you'll find all the others as well as plenty of *thurian ban*. The districts that grow the most durian are **Khiri Rat Nikhom** and **Ban Ta Khun**. Head to the national parks to find other durian oddities, like durian *pa* and durian *nok*. Look carefully and you might find the Ghost durian (thurian *pee*), which is actually not a durian at all but a distant relative called Neesia.

Watch Out: the interior of the Neesia is highly irritating to human skin.

Skip to **Koh Phangan** or **Koh Samui**.
Markets

In Town

Po Wai Market is a large fruit and vegetable market on Na-Mueng Road near Wat Po Wai.

Ban Don Pier Night Market Plenty of fruit can be found at this extensive night market running along Namueang Road, just north of the Donnok Road Bridge over the Tapi River.

Talad San Choa is a night market that concentrates near Wat Sai on Ton Poh Road, near the corner of Tri Anuson Road and Namuang Road.

Orchards and Homestays
1. **Pradit's Farmstay Holiday** ([Website](#), Contact Sarah at chaiyainfo@yahoo.com)  
This homestay, set in a durian and rubber orchard, is run by Sarah and Ka Pradit. They have 200 durian trees, mostly Monthong and Chanee, which ripen in October or November. The farm is close to Khao Sok National Park and offers a variety of day trip packages to beaches, hot springs, and temples.

2. **Khlong Bai Mai / Khlong Roi Sai Community** (49 Moo 5, Tambon Bang Chana, Surat Thani District, Contact Khun Phanu Chamnanmueang at: 077 205323 / 086 2676695, [Facebook](#).) These communities on the canals of the Tapee River are very close to Surat Thani town and an easy way to escape the city for a more peaceful, agricultural stay. Villagers offer homestays and tours of the gardens and fishermen's activities, highlighted by an evening display of fireflies. This isn't a commercial fruit growing region, so all fruit is grown in backyards for personal home use.

3. **Ban Tham Phueng Ecotourist Group** (182 Moo 5 Tambon Ton Yuan, Phanom District, Tel: 089 2909420, 087 2700136, Email: btp_5@hotmail.com) This village is 10 kilometers off Highway 401 from the Km 63 marker. There are 17 families offering homestays to tourists. The village also has 30 private cabins for visitors. For more information, visit [Homestay Thai](#).

**Getting There**
**Surat Thani International Airport** is located about 30 km north of the city in Phunphin District.

**Surat Thani Train Station** is located about 12 km outside of town in Phunphin District. Avoid the touts and take a municipal bus (colored orange) to the city center. You can buy a direct transfer to the ferries from the train station or wait until you get to the pier. Trains to and from Bangkok tend to fill up quickly, so book ahead of time.

**Buses** depart from three main stations around Surat. The newest station serving air-conditioned government buses is actually located 2 km outside the city en-route to the train station. You can catch a local bus heading to either the airport or the train station. The local bus station, a minivan station and the old bus station are all located across the street from each other downtown. Many buses also depart Donsak Pier, where you can catch a ferry to Koh Samui or Koh Phangan.

**Getting Around**

Surat Thani town is overrun with tuk-tuk drivers, taxis, and travel agents who would love to overcharge you. Watch out for “free” songthaew rides to tour agencies and use your haggling skills.

If you can figure out the municipal bus route, it’s really cheap. Otherwise, songthaews and minivans can take you to any of the national parks. If you really want to explore rural areas, rent a motorbike.

**Where to Stay**

As a transit center and destination, Surat Thani town and the islands offer plenty of accommodations that you can even book online. There are a variety of eco-resorts around the national parks, and the parks themselves permit camping and offer limited accommodations. Wat Suan Mokkhaphalaram Monastery also allows visitors.

**Fruitless Things To Do**

**Check out a local temple**

**Wat Suan Mokkhaphalaram** (Chaiya District) is a prominent monastery founded by the revered Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a controversial Buddhist teacher. The monastery hosts yoga and meditation retreats (Chaiya District, [Website](#)).

**Phra Borommathat Chaiya** (Chaiya District) is an ancient chedi constructed over 1,000 years ago, the temple is now combined with a small museum where you can view artifacts from the era.

**Wat Wiang, Wat Kaeo and Wat Long** (Chaiya District) are three stupas are located in the ancient city of Chaiya.

**Visit the islands** of Koh Samui, Koh Phangan, Koh Tao, or the lesser known Ko Nang Yuan.
Go Hiking or Trekking

**Kaeng Krung National Park** (Tha Chana, Chaiya, Tha Chang and Vibhavadi Districts)

**Khao Sok National Park** (Ban Ta Khun District)

**Khlong Phanom National Park** (Phanom District)

**Tai Romyen National Park** (Kanchanadit and Ban Na Sari Districts)

Relax at hotsprings

**Tha Sathon Hotspring** (Phunphin District)

**Chaiya Hotsprings** (Chaiya District)

**Kaper Hot Spring** (Kaeng Krung National Park)

**Bo Nam Ron Tham Singkhon** (Khiri Rat Nikhom District, near Wat Tham Singkhon)

Other Local Attractions

**Koh Lamphu** is a small car-free island in the middle of the Tapi River.

Watch trained monkeys harvest coconuts at **Ban Khlong Sai Monkey Training Center** or **Kradae Chae Monkey Training Center**.

Canoe or stay overnight on the water on floating bungalows at the very picturesque **Chiao Lan Reservoir** formed by the Rajjaprabha Dam.

**Go spelunking** at any of the limestone caves including Tham Khamin, Tham Men or Tham Nam Thalu.
THE ISLANDS: KOH SAMUI AND KOH PHANGAN

Paradise on earth might actually exist in these small islands off the coast of Chumphon and Surat Thani. Coconut fringed white sand beaches, sparkling turquoise water, cheap and comfortable accommodations, and fresh island-grown durian. Who could ask for more?

Koh Samui is the larger of the two islands and has more agricultural land, most of it dedicated to coconut production. Coconuts on Koh Samui are the cheapest of anywhere in Thailand. Most durian farming takes place in Samui’s mountainous interior, the beaches and coastal areas having been taken over by tourist resorts, high rises, and beach-side bars.

We visited Koh Samui at the beginning of our durian adventure.

Koh Phangan has maintained more of a backpacker's vibe, with plenty of hippie health stores, yoga centers and low-rent bungalows on the beach, but not without developing a reputation for wild beach parties that attract tens of thousands of revelers and extensive drug use. If this is not your thing it can be easily avoided by avoiding Had Rin on the night of full or new moons. If this sounds awesome, make it even better by bringing some fresh durian for a midnight snack.
Both islands enjoy two durian seasons, one in August/September and another in December/January. **Koh Tao** is the most pristine and undeveloped of the three islands and is popular among snorkelers and divers, but as far as we know no durians grow ashore.

**KOH SAMUI**

Most durian farms are located in the hills around **Yaod Khao (1)**, a 630 meter viewpoint overlooking Lamai Beach, but there are many farms in and around the interior. Just inland from Nathon the village of **Ban Lipa Yai (2)** is renowned for
growing various good fruits, including durian. The largest durian orchard on the island can be found next to the Magic Garden (3), also known as “Buddha's Secret Garden.” Built by elderly durian farmer Khun Nim Thongsuk in the 1970s, the serene garden full of hand-carved statues is maintained by his family. More durians can be found on the road between Ban Thurian (Durian Village) and the spectacular Namuang Waterfall (4).

Markets

1. **Chawaeng Afternoon and Night Market** is the largest market on the island. Chawaeng sprawls over a kilometer along the Ring Road in Laem Din with vendors selling everything from knockoff t-shirts, to fresh fish, to fruits. Here and Nathon Night Market are your best bets for finding durian out of season. If that fails, try the pickup trucks full of fruit that line Chawaeng Lake during the season.

2. **Nathon Night Market** on the old ferry pier gets going around 4 pm and continues late into the night. Fresh seafood is the big thing here, but the market itself is large enough you're likely to find some durian as well.

3. **Lamai Market** is a small wet market located on the Ring Road next to the PTT gas station and the Ayudhya Bank. It's open all day with a few vendors selling fruit and vegetables, but really gets going around 5 pm.

4. **Mae Nam Morning Market** is actually home to two markets, but the one of most interest to the fruit hunter is the morning market located near the old pier. Open as early as 4 am and closed by 9 am, this is the fresh fruit and vegetable market. A food market opens later in the day on the Ring Road, where you can sometimes find durian being sold as a snack or dessert.

5. **Bang Rak Market** opposite the main road that joins the airport and the beach is predominantly a fresh fish market. It has grown to incorporate some food stalls. This isn't your best bet for durian, although you can probably find a small amount of fruit and vegetables also being sold. You may have better luck at the several large fruit stalls near the Discovery Pier.

Guides

If you want to shell out the big bahts **Tours Koh Samui** will take you on a personalized day trip to the interior regions in a 4x4 Jeep with a driver who happens to be a durian farmer as well. They ask 5,000 baht for the day, including your durian.

Tours Koh Samui (24/3 M. 5 T. Bophut Beach, Tel: 081 7371984 / 077 961911, Website, Email: tks@tourskohsamui.com)
Between Thong Sala and Ban Khai, the land is flat and mostly used for coconut orchards. The majority of durian orchards are located in the mountainous northeastern corner of the island, the wilder, less developed side where the roads fade away to gravel. To see durian trees for yourself, drive along the road between Ban Tai and Thong Nai Pan. During the season you'll see small piles of durian propped up in front yards. Be
careful, as the roads (where paved) are made of cement and are slick with sand or rain during the wet season. Accidents are common.

See some gnarly pictures of Rob’s motorbike accident.

A lady named Aue rents a bungalow surrounded by durian trees located approximately 100 yards from Jungle Flight Zipline Adventures, at the top of a hill. Call her at Tel: 086 9450727.

There are also some durian ban trees on top of Khao Ra Phaeng Waterfall as well as some along the main road about 2 km from Chaluklam. During the season, there will be roadside stands selling durian.

Markets

1. Thong Sala Market is a daily fruit, vegetable, and meat market near the pier. This is the best place on the island to pick up fruits and veggies. There is one stall that sells all organic fruit on the Tesco side of the market street. They don't speak much English.

2. Thong Sala Night Market located near the 7-11, this is mostly for prepared Thai food. In the evening trucks laden with fruit or juice from the sea coconut sometimes park here.

3. Tesco Fruit Stall, a small street stand set up across the road from Tesco in Thong Sala, usually carries locally grown kradum thong durians, when in season.

4. Ban Tai Market is a small local market on the coastal road from Thong Sala.

5. Chaloklum Fruit Stalls There is no real central market in Chaloklum. A few fruit stalls set up daily and there are often trucks with fruit.
NAKHON SI THAMMARAT

Production: 17,134 tonnes per year

Mountainous and cool, Nakhon Si Thammarat has a certain, wild mystique. A coastal province split between highland jungles and stretches of wide white sand beaches, Nakhon Si Thammarat is a biodiversity hotspot blessed with nearly untouched coral reefs, national parks, and the ruins of an ancient culture slowly decaying into the jungle. It’s a cultural melting pot of Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic influences and a mix of modern city and remote, backwater villages. Easily accessible from either the mainland or from Koh Samui and Koh Phangan, the mystery is really why so few tourists come here.

Nakhon Si is a haven for any nature or durian lover. Durian grows wild in the mountain valleys and in orchards carefully blended into the forest. This style of agriculture is called Suan Som Rom, or “Shade Garden.” Instead of clear cutting swathes of land for gardens, villagers intersperse fruit trees through the mature forest and irrigate using a gravity based drip system. Fruit growing is the major economic industry here, and villagers are creative in making products from their orchards. Thurian guan and mangosteen wine are common, as well as hand-made soap and dyes made from fruit peels.
With plenty of caves, waterfalls, and the highest mountain in Southern Thailand, Nakhon Si is a nature-lover's paradise. Add in a lot of organic thurian ban, some rare durian species, and an extended durian season, Nakhon Si Thammarat is a durian treasure trove. The only downside is that, with two monsoon seasons, it can get very wet.

Skip to [Nakhon Si Thammarat Map](#).

**Highlights**

- Experience durian growing in its natural habitat.
- Learn about integrative agricultural methods.
- Trek through Khao Luang National Park looking for durian species.

**Durians to Look for**

Most of the durian growing around Nakhon Si is *thurian ban*, the durian grown from seed. With thousands of varieties and endless possibilities for flavor, eating thurian ban is a gamble—will it be white or yellow, sweet or bitter? There are a few local varieties as
well, like **Tub Tim**, a deep yellow-fleshed durian that is extremely sweet, and **Benjaphan**, a slightly bitter durian with light orange flesh.

In recent years farmers have started cutting down the old stands of local durian to make way for Monthong, Chanee, and Ganyao, which can be sold at higher prices. These tend to ripen at the end of the durian season, after the *thurian ban* is mostly finished.

The major durian growing areas are clustered around Khao Luang National Park. Check out **Lan Saka District**, **Prom Kiri District**, and **Chang Klang District**. Durians tend to ripen one or two months earlier in Chang Klang than in Lan Saka, extending the season by several months.

**Markets**

1. **Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipal Market** is located at the intersection of Ratchadamnoen Road and Thanon Pak Nakhon Road. This is the typical bustling morning market selling all manner of fruits, veggies, and meats.

2. **Lang Dao Night Market** is located along Jamroenwitee Road near the train station. This evening market sets up around 6 pm with food stalls selling every kind of sweet and savory treat you could ask for, including durian.

3. **Hua-it Market** is about 2 km outside of Nakhon Si Thammarat Town on Garom Road toward Pho Sadet. This is a large fruit and vegetable market.

4. **Ban Sikhi Farmer Group Fruit Center Market** is on Highway 4015 in Tha Di sub-district of Lan Sak District and is a fruit wholesale market.
Orchards and Homestays

1. **Ban Khiriwong Village** (Lan Saka District Tel: 075 533370 / 075 533113. [Website](#)) Nestled at the base of Khao Luang Mountain, this community on the fringes of Khao Luang National Park is only 30 km from Nakhon Si Thammarat Town but worlds away from the hustle and bustle of modern life. Visitors are invited to take part in daily
activities and learn from a people still very much in tune with the ways of the forest. Contact Ban Khiri Wong Visitor Service Center, Tambon Kamlon, Amphoe Lan Saka,. Open everyday.

2. Thammachat Eco and Health Resort Currently under construction, this is a health resort located in Khiriwong Village for those who love fruit, run by an American named Trevor. Visitors can enjoy all-organic durian and other fruit from their poly-culture orchard, where he has seedlings of orange and red-fleshed Durio graveolens, Durio oxleyanus, and Durio dulcis. Some were seeds that we mailed to Trevor from Borneo. Construction of four bamboo bungalows should be completed six months after publishing of this eBook. For now visitors are invited to camp. Internet access is provided, but there is no wifi. In the future, Trevor will publish updates of the durian season on his website. For now, contact him at mameysapote@gmail.com.

3. Phrom Loke Eco Village (Website listing) Less well-known than Khiriwong Village, Phrom Lok Village is on the northern side of Khao Luang National Park in Promkiri District. It has a similar thing going on to Khiriwong. Villagers are mostly fruit farmers growing rambutan, mangosteen, mimusops, durian, and rubber. They offer homestays, hikes to the nearby Promlok Waterfall, and treks into Khao Luang National Park. To set up a visit, contact TAT Nakhon Si Thammarat (Tel: 075 3465156 / 075 34 6517 Email: tatnksri@tat.or.th).

Local Guides

Trevor is an American durian lover who lives in Khiriwong Village. He can help organize your trip to Khiriwong Village, show you around, and arrange guided treks to Khao Luang National Park.
Getting There

Daily flights from Bangkok arrive in Nakhon Si Thammarat Airport, 20 km north of the city.

There are two train stations in Nakhon Si. One is located about 40 km away from the city in Thung Song, while the other is conveniently located downtown on Yommarat Road.

Buses from Bangkok's Southern Terminal take 12–14 hours and arrive at a bus station about 2 km from downtown, along Garom Rd. A few private bus companies have pick up points on Jamroenwithee Road near the train station.

Minivans depart from various locations around Nakhon Si, depending on your destination. Most pick up points are near Yommarat Road or Jamroenwithee Road.

Getting Around

Songthaews are so plentiful and easy to use for getting around Nakhon Si Thammarat Town that there's really no reason to take a motorcycle taxi. You can also hire a
songthaew to take you further afield. Because there are so few tourists, people are very friendly and will go the extra mile to help you find your way.

Where to Stay

Although there are plenty of accommodations in Nakhon Si Thamarat Town to choose from, there simply aren’t enough foreign tourists to support backpacker guesthouses. Hotels cater either to businessmen or domestic tourists visiting to see the Wat. Outside of town, there are accommodations in the beach towns Sichon or Khanom. You can also do a homestay at Ban Khiriwong Village or Prom Lok Village, or camp in the national parks.

Fruitless Activities

Check out the famous and unpronounceable Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan, constructed circa 757 AD.

Explore ruins fading into the jungle at Wat Thao Kot and then grab a snack at the nearby fruit market.

Chill at the beaches in Khanom District or Sichon District.

Go snorkeling at Thung Yi or Thong Yang Beach or head out to the 8 islands that make up Mu Ko Thale Tai National Park.

Go trekking or camping

  - Khao Luang National Park (Lan Saka District)
  - Nam Tok Yong National Park (Thung Song District)
  - Namtok Si Khit National Park (Sichon District)
  - Khao Nan National Park (Nakhon Si District) Look for wild cempedak here.
PHUKET AND PHANG-NGA

Phuket Production: 580 tonnes per year

Phang-nga Production: 5,858 tonnes per year

While not a major durian producer, Phang-Nga has an interesting durian variety called Salika, which is from Tambon Tung Maprao village, 15 km from Tai Muang. You can sometimes find it on roadside stalls in Phuket Town and nearby Chalong. Phuket has a very small national forest called Khao Phra Thaew, where you can see Durio mansoni as well as durian's botanical cousin, Neesia. In Thai, Neesia is called Thurian pee, or ghost durian.

For a taste of the durian's culinary potential, head to DiVine Restaurant in Phuket. If you're in Phuket in May, make sure to hit up the Durian Festival at Thanyapura’s DiVine Restaurant (120/1 Moo 7 Thepkasattri Rd., Thalang, Phuket, Website). The annual week-long event features durian in more than 30 appetizers, entrees, salads, desserts, and even mixed drinks. This is currently the only restaurant in the world showcasing durian in gourmet cuisine, which makes the event quite special. Unfortunately, the menu has not been terribly vegetarian friendly, so if you're keen to go, make sure to write to DiVine and encourage them to ease off on the animal products.

Read more about the menu.
YALA AND NARATHIWAT

Yala Production: 16,220 tonnes per year
Narathiwat Production: 6,040 tonnes per year

In many ways these two southernmost provinces have more in common with bordering Malaysia than with Thailand. Buddhism is the minority religion, and instead of Thai, people speak a dialect of Malay known as Yawi which uses the Arabic alphabet. You’re also more likely to find curries cooked with the Malay fermented durian (tempoyak) and Malaysian durian varieties like D24 that were allowed to ripen on the tree.

Durian orchards in these provinces get a lot of attention in the media, but not usually in a good way. In August 2013, two durian growers were found shot in the neck in Narathiwat, a week before, a dead man was found on a durian farm, and in February four durian farmers in Yala were murdered. The murders are part of the sporadic violence between Islamic separatists and the Thai government, and occured in durian orchards simply because the orchards are rural, out-of-the-way places. A May 2013 hotel bombing in neighboring Songkhla has further kept tourists away, leaving the pristine beaches and extremely biodiverse national forests deserted.

Thanks to the ongoing unrest, this area has so few tourists that there are no durian orchards officially open for tours, homestays, or fruit lunches. Instead we’ve listed the major durian growing areas so that you can go on your own durian adventure. People
may be very excited to see a traveler, and asking for durian might result in a tour of someone’s personal durian orchard. Just be polite and go with the flow. That is, if you can stomach wandering the countryside in this area.

Skip to Narathiwat and Yala Map.

**Highlights**

- Cook yourself and a durian at the hot springs in Betong.
- Find wild durian species at Hala Bala.
- Become a durian explorer and let us know what you find!

**Durians to Look For**

The real highlight of this area is that durians are allowed to fall instead of being cut, giving them a very different flavor than typical Thai durian. Keep an eye out for Malaysian varieties like D24 or Musang King, which was actually discovered less than 50 kilometers away, just over the border in Tanah Merah. There’s bound to be plenty of **thurian ban (kampung durian)**, too.

Even more exciting, if you explore the Hala Bala National Park in Yala, you can find three species of durian: *Durio griffithi*, *Durio macrophyllus* and *Durio graveolens*. Of the three, only *graveolens* is edible, but is so delicious some people actually prefer it to regular durian.
Durian Hot Spots

Since there is no tourism industry here, there are also no durian orchards that cater to the durian tourist. Instead, I've compiled major durian hot spots in the two regions.

NARATHIWAT

Narathiwat produces as much durian as Uttaradit, but makes little to no fuss about it. The fruit of pride in this coastal province is Longkong, a small fruit with a translucent sweet interior. Ra-ngae District is particularly well known for Longkong, and, based on the news reports for murders in durian orchards, the district has quite a number of durian orchards as well. The main durian growing region is in Rueso, Srisakorn, and Bacho Districts (pronounced Bajo). If you want, you can stay in bungalows in the National Park or bring your own camping equipment.

Sungai Kolok is a popular border market for Malaysians to pick up fresh fruits.
Chat Warin Waterfall is a 7-tiered cascade located at the entrance to Budo-Sungai Padi National Park about 6 kilometers from Sungai Padi Town. The waterfall area is surrounded by groves of wild durian.

Durian Mosque (Rueso District) is just a mosque, but we like the name.

Hala Bala Wildlife Sanctuary is refuge to a remarkable number of endangered species and is especially popular among birders. Over 350 species of birds call this sanctuary home, along with the Asian elephant, Malaysian sun bear, and the Javan rhinoceros. You can find three species of durian here: *Durio macrophyllus*, *Durio griffithii*, and the edible *Durio graveolens*. Natural trails wind through the sanctuary and you can stop by the Flora Research Center to get an idea of where to start your durian hunt.

YALA

Yala is an import producer of durians for the China export market and is one of the biggest durian producing provinces in Thailand.

Yala Fruit Festival is held the last week in August in Yala Town at the Kwan Muang Gardens.

Betong In addition to hot springs that can cook eggs in 7 minutes, cool weather, and the largest mailbox in the world, Betong grows a lot of durian. The orchards are easily found by following the road between the Winter Garden and the hot springs in Ban Charo Parai Village.

Ban Thurian Nok This small town is named after a wild durian. We have no idea what's there, but it might be a good start to a durian adventure.

Getting There

The nearest airport is Narathiwat International Airport.

Narathiwat is the southernmost point of the Southern Rail Line, which splits at Hat Yai into a southwestern direction to Butterworth and Penang through the border crossing at Padang Besar and a Southeasterly line through Narathiwat to the border crossing at Sungai Kholok. To continue onward into Malaysia, passengers must disembark in Sungai Kholok and bus to Pasir Mas, where a train line resumes.

There is also a border crossing in Yala at Betong and another, smaller crossing in Tak Bai at Ban Ta Ba / Pengkalan Kulor. All are open to foreigners and are easily accessible.

Getting to Yala and Narathiwat by bus is easy, as long as you don't mind the frequent military check points. Buses and minivans stop at the New Narathiwat Bus Terminal outside of town and at the Yala Bus Terminal on the edge of town.

Fruitless Things To Do
Narathiwat

Visit a Mosque

Masjid Jangwat is the provincial mosque on the northern end of Thanon Pichitbamrung in Narathiwat Town.

Masjid Klang is a wooden mosque built in the Sumatran style on the southern end of Thanon Pichitbamrung in Narathiwat Town. It is said to have been built 100 years ago by the former king.

Masjid Durian is a mosque in Rueso District named for our beloved fruit.

Wadil Husen Mosque (300-Year-Old Mosque) is a wooden mosque believed to have been built in 1769 using traditional ironwood and wooden bolts and pins.

Chill at a Beach

Narathat Beach (Naratiwat District)
Sadej Beach (Tak Bai District)
Hat Kubu - Ban Khlong Tan (Tak Bai District)
Ao Manao Khao Tanyong National Park (Bacho District)

Go Trekking or Camping

Budo-Sungai Padi National Park (Rueso District)
Namtok Sipo National Park (Rangae District)
Pa Phru To Daeng Peat Swamp (Sungai Kolok District, Narathiwat) Thailand's largest peat swamp can easily be viewed on raised wooden boardwalks that are well-marked in both Thai and English.

Hala-Bala Wildlife Sanctuary (Waeng, Su Khirin, and Chanae Districts) is the collective name for two separate protected areas that are diversity hotspots. Hala Wildlife Sanctuary is the larger of the two and is on the border of Narathiwat and Yala, while Bala is on the border of Narathiwat and Malaysia. They're both popular with birders and it is in these jungles that the greatest diversity of wild durian species in Thailand grow, if you can find them. Limited accommodations and camping are available. We recommend hiring a trail guide for durian hunts.

Random Local Attractions

Thaksin Ratchaniwet Palace Located near Ao Manao/Khao Tanyong National Park, King Bumibol Adulyadej commissioned its construction in 1973 as his summer residence. The palace is open daily for public viewing except between October and December when the king and his family visit.

Check out a temple:

Wat Khuhaphimuk/Wat Na Tham (Yala District)
Phra Mahathat Chedi Phra Phutthatham Prakat (Bentong District)
See some cool caves:

Tham Maenang Montho (Yala District)

Tham Sin (Yala District) 1 km beyond Wat Khuhaphimuk, this cave features very faint ancient rock paintings depicting the Lord Buddha dating from the 14th century.

Tham Phab Khien Fa Panang (Yala District) are located only 6 km from Yala town and contain 500-year-old paintings.

Tham Krachaeng (Bannang Sata) is a cave with a stream running through it. There are three other caves nearby.

Go trekking in Bang Lang National Park (Than To District), which partially includes the Hala sector of the Hala-Bala Wildlife Sanctuary.
Acknowledgments

This book would not exist without the patience of many people who bore the insistent and peculiar queries of my unquenchable obsession with only a few raised eyebrows. Really, durian?

First, I would like to thank all the durian-addicted readers of my blog, Year of the Durian for following along with us on our durian-centric travels. I wrote this book for you. Your comments, questions, and feedback were a daily inspiration, reminding me that Rob and I are not alone in our fiendish desire for the King of Fruit. I sincerely hope that this book is useful to you. I also hope some day we can come together for a giant durian party. That would be fun.

I also want to thank my truly wonderful Mom and Dad. Although I've spent two years now constantly traveling the world on a bizarre quest, they've still never told me to get a job. I take that as a vote of confidence. I love you.

As far as practical help developing this book, I have to thank Eve Ajaree of the Nonthaburi Agricultural Department and Peyanoot Naka of the Horticultural Research Institute, who both speak such good English that they were the victims of my great number of requests for statistics and information. This book really could not exist without their assistance.

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Fon, you are an amazing translator and probably the best freelancer on Fiverr.com. If anyone needs help with translating Thai documents, check out her page.

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On our travels we met a number of people without whose guidance or translation help we never could have gathered the information for this book. In particular, I want to thank Julian Steffen, Apai Burivong, and Nong. On separate occasions both Nong and Apai spent a day driving around in an amazingly powerful monsoonal rain to find durian farms just to help me. I will always be touched by their kindness.

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I hear that the person you thank last is the most important, and that person is my husband Rob. The existence of this book is because of a big dream he had a few years ago to eat durian all over the world. When I met him I could never have imagined just what an adventure our life would be together. We never seem to know what’s next, but whatever it is, I’m looking forward to it.
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6. **Yield by Province.** 2010 data provided by Peyanoot Naka, Senior Scientist, Assistant Director of Horticulture Research Institute, Chatuchak, Bangkok. (See following chart.)

7. **Total Area of Cultivation.** 2010 data provided by Peyanoot Naka, Senior Scientist, Assistant Director of Horticulture Research Institute, Chatuchak, Bangkok.

8. **Domestic Durian Consumption.** 2013 data provided by Peyanoot Naka, Senior Scientist, Assistant Director of Horticulture Research Institute, Chatuchak, Bangkok.


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11. **Durian Variety Maturation Rate.** Thailand Department of Internal Trade.  
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13. **Thai Plant Names.** Thailand Department of National Parks.  

14. **Chlorpyrifos linked to tourist deaths Daily Mail.** “British couple and five other tourists died in Thailand 'because of bed bug pesticide poisoning'” 10 May 2011.  


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<tr>
<th>Province, Alphabetically Arranged</th>
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*2013 data* provided by Peyanoot Naka, Senior Scientist, Assistant Director of Horticulture Research Institute, Chatuchak, Bangkok.