

AMBASSADORS' FACT SHEET

CHIANG MAI, THAILAND



Ambassadors' Fact Sheet: Chiang Mai, Thailand



To help our students and graduates make a smooth transition to their new lives teaching English abroad, we've enlisted our [ITA Ambassadors](#) to provide us with insider facts and tips for making the most of life in major cities around the globe like Chiang Mai.

Whether it's finding an English-speaking doctor, opening a bank account, or simply finding a supermarket where you can find the odd comfort food from home (peanut butter!), our ambassadors have actionable on-the-ground-tips to help you feel at home in your new home city. Please note that things change and we will do our best to keep these "Fact Sheets" updated over time and that current and future ambassadors will continue to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information possible.

Meet Our Chiang Mai Ambassador



MELISSA

City	Chiang Mai
Country	Thailand
Visa Type	Tourist Visa
North American Comfort Food Locations	<p>Chiang Mai is pretty westernized so finding items from home isn't really hard. The main grocery stores that I go to are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rimping: 55 Huay Kaew Rd, Tambon Chang Phueak, Amphoe Mueang Chiang Mai (under Maya Mall). 2. Tops: All over the city. 3. Tesco: All over the city. <p>My favorite is Rimpling and the prices vary depending on what you need, of course western items will always be pricier than Asian items (the brand of peanut butter I buy is \$3). They also have North American cereal and canned food for making things like pasta sauce, hummus, and even chowder!</p> <p>There are two major shopping stores:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Big C: Highway 108, Mae HIA, Mueang Chiang Mai, Chiang Mai 2. Tesco Lotus: All over the city. <p>These are a lot like Walmart and Target with just about anything you are looking for. They are perfect for when you are settling here and need anything for your apartment including towels, rugs, cleaning products, decorations, etc. Also 7-11 stores are literally everywhere - you can get snacks, freezer food, coffee, toilet paper, and even alcohol from them. There are small, cheap Thai mom and pop stores all over Chiang Mai, and my favorite one near my apartment has so many of my favorite comfort American foods including peanut butter, Chips Ahoy, Doritos, Goldfish, and even Kraft Mac & Cheese.</p>



Transportation

The most common form of transportation that I have found for teaching here in Chiang Mai is motorbikes. It may sound crazy and scary (I know it did to me at first) but once you get here, you see how common it is to have one. After practicing for a couple of weeks, I felt very comfortable and actually go on drives just for fun on the weekend because I enjoy it so much. If you are here long term, you can buy one for around 8 or 9,000 baht (about \$270 USD). I prefer just renting one and the company I use is awesome. I can share this information with you personally if you contact me! Also, download maps.me on your phone which allows you to use offline maps.

- **Motorbike Rent:** 2,500 baht (\$74 USD) per month (comes with helmet)

- **Gas:** Around 400/500 baht (\$12-\$15 USD) per month (to fill my gas tank it costs me \$3 USD).

Note: There are sometimes Police checkpoints randomly where they will pull over foreigners and tell you your license isn't legal and that you owe x amount of money, usually around 500 baht. I always keep 200 baht separate and just tell them this is all that I have and they usually let you go. Some people choose to fight it but I find this option easier. If you want, you can pay for a Thai license, but I don't know much about this.

<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Public Transport</p> <p>Red Trucks/Songthaew: is a pick-up truck used as a shared taxi or bus. The set price (if the driver says no different so don't ask price at first) is 20 baht (less than \$1 USD). You should expect higher prices if you are going really far, if it's in the middle of the night, or if you are going to a very touristy place. They are everywhere so they are really easy to find and my friends and I use them on the weekends when we know we will be having a few drinks. Learn your Thai numbers and you are more likely to get a better price when you do have to negotiate.</p> <p>Uber: Uber has recently become huge in Chiang Mai and also not very expensive at all unless it is raining or a holiday, still not much compared to home. I use Uber sometimes for school if it is raining and there is never one more than five minutes away.</p> <p>Bicycle: You can buy a bicycle for about 3,000 baht (\$90 USD). I personally wouldn't feel comfortable riding one with the traffic, but a lot of people do!</p> <p>Taxis/Tuk-Tuks: They are also all over the city but the drivers tend to charge a lot more because they target tourists. I think they are a lot of fun so try it at least once. They usually start at around 150 baht (\$5 USD) which can add up quickly.</p> <p>Note: I live in an area called Nimman and everything that I need is within walking distance from me. I use my motorbike more for school and on the weekends to explore.</p>
<p>Hospitals & Doctors (English Speaking)</p>	<p>Chiang Mai Ram Hospital is the absolute best (I have friends that had great experiences there), and then Bangkok Chiang Mai Hospital, and McCormick Hospital. The rest are Government hospitals that are low quality, minimum English speakers, and you will be waiting a very long time.</p>

**Hospitals & Doctors
(English Speaking)**

Whenever I was sick, I went to a clinic that was recommended to me by one of my students' parents (American) and I absolutely loved it. It cost me 500 baht (\$15 USD) and my doctor was so helpful and spoke great English. [This](#) is the website for it, and you can even make your appointments online!



**Beauty Supply Stores,
Hairdressers & Barbers**

As far as hair dressers, **Cut Cut Color** is my favorite. **New York New York** is popular, as is a place called **Absolute**.

I buy my favorite brand of shampoo/conditioner/soap and coconut oil from Rimping (my favorite grocery store that I mentioned earlier). I am particular about what I use on my skin at night and actually found my favorite product in the pharmacies here (which they don't require a prescription for).

As far as make-up, hair products, nail polish, perfume, etc, there are malls that have all of these things. If you aren't particular, you can find off-brand make-up and other products at local markets or small stores that you see everywhere. My favorite malls are **Maya** and **Central Festival**. In Central Festival, you literally feel like you are in an American mall, they have a lot of the same brands of make-up, hair products (even Aveda), and perfumes (all of the name-brand items will be close to the price you would pay at home).

Beauty Supply Stores, Hairdressers & Barbers	<p>My advice (if you are particular like me) is to bring a new one of whatever it is that you like from home, and then by the time you need to stock up, you will be well aware of where to find everything!</p>
Bank Account Location	<p>I haven't had to open an account.</p>
Restaurants	<p>I could literally list 30 off the top of my head (because I love Chiang Mai for this) but I will try to narrow it down to some of my favorites. There are also plenty of vegan/vegetarian options.</p> <p>Favorite Brunch Spots:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rustic & Blue: Amazing avocado eggs benedict, chicken waffles, and muesli bowls! 2. The Hideout: The best baguettes and bagels in Chiang Mai. Their breakfast sandwiches are to die for. 3. Smoothie Blues: Great breakfast and smoothies. A lot of healthy options. <p>Favorite Thai Restaurants: Most of my favorite Thai restaurants are little hole in the wall shops or street carts that don't even have English names. I would have to lead you to them once you are here.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Crazy Noodle: Build your own noodle soup (pick your own noodles, broth, meat, and whatever else you want in it). 5. Coconut Shell: Delicious Thai food served in coconut shells. <p>Favorite Western Restaurants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Why Not?: Amazing Italian food. 7. Salsa Kitchen: The best Mexican food with massive portions. 8. By Hand: My favorite (wood fired) pizza in Chiang Mai.

<p>Restaurants</p>	<p>9. Beast Burger: Good size burgers FULL of flavor (also vegetarian options).</p> <p>10. Ohkajhu Farm: Cheap, build you own salads. All their vegetables are grown in their own organic garden outside of Chiang Mai.</p>
<p>Hotspots</p>	<p>Drinks: Most bars close at 12.</p> <p>1. International Food Park: Live music, cool seating, all kinds of food and drinks (open every night near the night bazaar).</p> <p>2. Y Lover: 220 baht (\$6 USD) for one hour of all-you-can-drink wine every night between 6-8pm. They literally keep your glass full.</p> <p>3. North Gate Jazz Co-Op: Live jazz jam bands every night at 8pm. Huge expat crowd.</p> <p>4. Archers: Great drinks, Friday nights you roll the dice and each number has a different drink special.</p> <p>5. Loco Elvis: Cheap Margaritas and live music.</p> <p>6. THC Rooftop Bar: Cool vibes, views, and you sit on the floor.</p> <p>Clubs: For those that like to dance.</p> <p>7. Zoe in Yellow: Very popular with a large backpackers crowd, a lot of different music options (club music, EDM, reggae).</p> <p>8. Warm Up Cafe: Live music room and electronic room. Pricier drinks but delicious and strong. Mainly a Thai crowd.</p> <p>9. Mandalay: Your typical club.</p>

Hotspots

Markets: Thai markets are incredible. I go all the time and they never get boring to me. You can shop, eat, drink, watch live entertainment, walk through temples, and simply wander.

10. Sunday Night Market: MASSIVE and is known worldwide. It can get really crowded so I try to go at 5pm when it opens.

11. The Night Bazaar: Open every night, you can negotiate prices - just learn your simple Thai terms and numbers and you will get way better deals.

12. Saturday Night Market: Like the Sunday market but less people.

Miscellaneous: Sights to visit/relax at on the weekends around the city.

13. Grand Canyon: Half is a water park area and the other area you can relax in the water, jump off the canyons, or zip line.

14. Doi Suthep: A gorgeous temple on the mountain with lots of cool look out points and waterfalls on the way up.

15. Huay Tung Tao Lake: A beautiful lake outside the city where you can eat in little huts on the water and do typical lake activities.

16. Sticky Waterfalls: Waterfalls you can climb!

17. Pamper Yourself: There are massage places EVERYWHERE. Find your favorite one and you usually won't pay more than \$9 USD for an hour traditional Thai massage.

Note: There are tourist centers all over the city with free brochures if you are interested in traveling around or doing excursions around Chiang Mai (cooking classes, elephant sanctuary visits, jungle treks, etc).



<p>Permanent Housing Resources</p>	<p>In Chiang Mai it is free to hire a Realtor. We contacted a company called Perfect Homes and filled out a survey of everything that we were looking for and our price range. We knew the area we were interest in simply by spending the first few days here exploring and asking around. Our agent brought us to four different apartments and we found ours on the first day! You can also set out on foot or motorbike and walk into buildings you are interested in to inquire about them. Everyone usually speaks some English and is friendly and happy to help.</p>
<p>Expat Community Resources</p>	<p>It is easy to meet expats in Chiang Mai as it is said to have the biggest expat community in South East Asia. I Personally already knew a couple of girls from my TEFL school in Cambodia, but we expanded our group through meeting other people while out and about on weekends, at the schools we teach at, and also through Facebook groups. Some good Facebook groups to join are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ITA Thailand Alumni Group - Teachers of Chiang Mai - Chiang Mai Nomad Girls - Chiang Mai Expat Teachers Group
<p>Additional Information</p>	<p>Honestly, people in Chiang Mai are so friendly so never be afraid to ask for help. As long as you really make an effort to put yourself out there, you are going to find everything you need. I find that the sooner you learn your way around, explore, and get to know a city, the sooner you feel comfortable, happy, and at home!</p>



Additional Resources:

- [Teaching English in Thailand: Country Profile](#)
- [How Much Money Can You Learn & Save Teaching English in Thailand?](#)
- [10 Reasons Why I Loved Teaching English in Thailand](#)
- [Oh, The People You Will Meet - Teaching English in Thailand](#)
- [Thailand Alumni Facebook Group](#): Only enrolled students & alumni may post, but anybody can check out the conversation between ITA grads teaching English in Thailand on a wide array of topics from job tips and apartment hunting to recreational activities & social meet-ups.