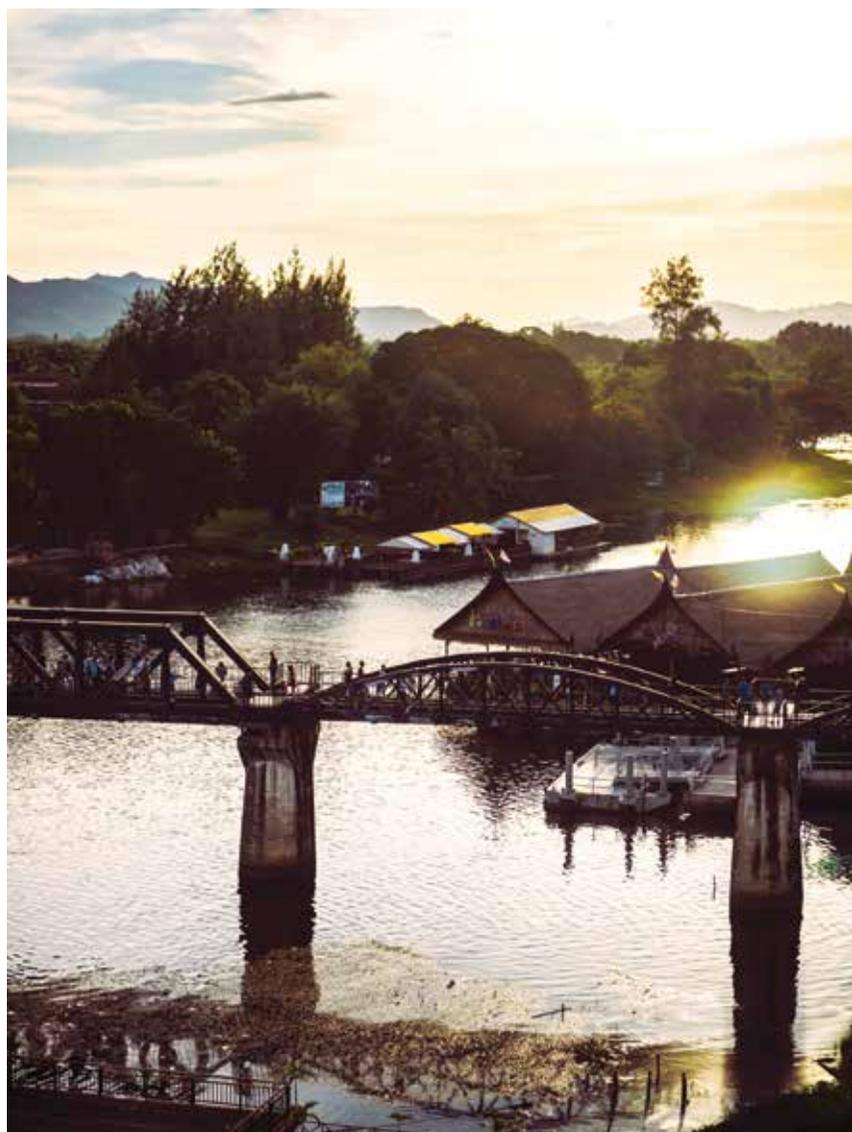


24  
HOURS IN

# Kanchanaburi

Made famous by the 1957 war movie *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, Kanchanaburi, just a few hours' drive from Bangkok, is not only about girders and beams



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**6.30AM** You'll need to be up early to catch the special train from Bangkok's historic Hua Lamphong Station, – it runs only on public holidays and weekends, but it's worth sacrificing your Saturday for the scenic ride to Kanchanaburi. Like most of the passengers, the trains are in no rush, so enjoy the scenery from your window as you leave the crowded city behind and set off into the pretty countryside. While there's no dining car onboard the train, you can buy some tasty snacks and drinks from the vendors who wander up and down the aisles.

**Where:** Hua Lamphong Station, Rama IV Rd, Bangkok; railway.co.th

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**9.35AM** Following a short stop at the main Kanchanaburi station, the train chugs along another 10 minutes or so to your destination, the bridge on the river Kwai. It's made of iron shipped here from the occupied Dutch East Indies by the Japanese army in the 40s: the curved spans are the originals, while the straight ones are replacements following a bombing raid by the US air force.

**Where:** River Kwai Bridge Train Station, Kwaiyai Rd, Kanchanaburi; railway.co.th

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**10.30AM** After a wander around the open-air tourist market that surrounds the bridge, seek out the air-conditioned surrounds of the Library Café, just down the road. These designer digs

draw a well-heeled crowd of visiting Bangkokians, who come for the array of Thai noodle dishes, excellent smoothies, craft beers and incredible desserts – try the mango *bingsu*, a mound of shaved ice topped with fresh mango.

**Where:** 268/1 Maenamkwai Rd, Kanchanaburi; facebook.com/library-cafe

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**1PM** Gravité probably serves the best cup of coffee in Kanchanaburi. This smart little café sits incongruously at the end of the raucous backpacker bar strip along Maenamkwai Road, and is run by a friendly barista serving only drip coffee. He uses single-origin beans from Kenya, Ethiopia and, of course, Thailand.

**Where:** 3/17 Maenamkwai Rd, Kanchanaburi; facebook.com/gravitedrip

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**2PM** The Thailand-Burma Railway Centre is a stark reminder of why this otherwise sleepy province is on the tourist trail. This museum is dedicated to the history of the 'Death Railway'

and explains through an incredible assemblage of exhibits – including photos, videos and artefacts – how almost half of an estimated 200,000 forced labourers died to build a 415km railway in just 16 months.

**Where:** 73 Jaokannun Rd, Kanchanaburi; tbronline.com

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**4PM** Directly opposite the Thailand-Burma Railway

Centre is a sombre sight that puts everything into perspective. The impeccably maintained Kanchanaburi War Cemetery is run by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. One of two such cemeteries in Thailand (the other lies on the other side of the river), it commemorates 7,000 soldiers who died in captivity.

**Where:** 284/66 Sangchuto Rd, Kanchanaburi; cwgc.org



You'll need a hearty lunch for this daytrip. Refuel at the trendy Library Café

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**4.20PM** Although the train back to Bangkok doesn't depart until 4.53pm, give yourself some time to stroll through the market next to the station. It's very much a Thai affair, especially when compared to the market by the bridge; you'll find locals picking up a takeaway dinner, browsing cheap fashion and catching up over a beer. Stock up on some supplies for your journey back to Bangkok, such as fresh spring rolls, fried chicken and buttered corn.

**Where:** Kanchanaburi Train Station, Sangchuto Rd, Kanchanaburi; railway.co.th ✈

## Travel Info

Singapore → Bangkok  
up to five times daily

jetstar.com

