

■ LAMPANG

## Stall life

*Kad Kong Ta, Lampang's charming weekend market, is a great way to get acquainted with the town's chilled vibe and multicultural legacy*



**B**eginning at Ratchadapisek Bridge, a town landmark spanning the Wang River, the Lampang market unfolds along the length of historic Thanon Talat Gao, or old market street. In the early 20th century, this narrow avenue was the headquarters for a handful of English and Burmese teak companies. Chinese, Indian, Malay and Khmer merchants joined the fray, leaving behind a community rich in heritage buildings and classic fusion fare. These days, Kad Kong Ta peddles savoury and sweet treats, handicrafts, trendy duds, vintage threads, garden plants and household wares. Palm readers set up shop on folding tables,

and artists get busy with paint and easel. Musicians assemble in small groups with classical instruments, and old-timers gossip while putting the finishing touches on traditional gold and white paper lanterns. Kad Kong Ta is flanked by some of the town's most striking heritage buildings, and it's worth stopping to admire the carved balconies and painted eaves. The market officially begins at 6pm with live streaming of the Thai national anthem. For about 90 seconds, vendors and patrons come to a complete standstill as a sign of respect. Immediately afterwards, the market's lively spirit takes over. *Every Saturday and Sunday from 6-10pm*



■ KOH SAMUI

## Life's a beach

*Dance into the wee small hours at Samui's longest-running beach party*

Every Wednesday and Friday nights, heady Chaweng Beach is glowing with brilliant fire-twirling shows, fireworks, live music and great tunes. If you're keen to break up your resort relaxation with some partying, Ark Bar on this loud stretch of sand is your best bet, with its fun and quirky entertainment concept. The beach club has the advantage of an absolute beachfront location (some bars are tucked away in unappealing buildings off the sand), shimmying go-go dancers, a very energetic percussionist and some of the best DJs on the island. [ark-bar.com](http://ark-bar.com)

■ PHUKET

## Chill in the night

*Inside the island's newest hipster hangout*

Phuket has always had plenty of great markets – from the tourist-gear Naka Night Market, with its Chang T-shirts, to Lard Yai, the Sunday evening event that sees part of the Old Town pedestrianised. However, the one thing Phuket was always lacking was a bohemian hangout like those in Bangkok – until now, that is. Earlier this year, the Chillva Market sprung up in the island's

working-class Sam Kong district. There is nightly live music, as well as food trucks and vintage VW vans converted into mobile cocktail lounges. At the back are converted shipping containers, which house beer bars and fried-chicken joints, while stalls sell cute handicraft and street eats, including great homemade ice cream and popcorn. Open daily from 5-11pm. [facebook.com/chillvamarket](https://facebook.com/chillvamarket)





## PHUKET

# Art in a glass

Inside Thailand's newest, most radical craft cocktail bar

There's no menu at Zimplex Mixology Laboratory. Instead, patrons at this one-of-a-kind bar in Phuket Town are handed a card upon entry, which carries a quick-response code. You need to use an app on your phone to scan this, revealing a magical world of shots with names like Willy Wonka, Pac Man and Hannibal, in which schnapps, rum, gin, cream liqueur and bitters are combined in a skull-shaped shot glass to form what can be best described as "floating brains"; while the Parallel Universe – absinthe, vodka, and liqueurs – is

a veritable galaxy in a glass.

The "Mixology Laboratory" part of the name comes from the way the co-owners, Parist "Tom" Auttayamavittaya and his girlfriend Chanida "Nann" Yantapanit, make your drinks using tools straight out of a science lab, including droppers, test tubes and measurement beakers – the precision is what enables the spectacular results. By their estimate, the couple tested more than 20,000 shots to create the menu.

An average night at the bar, which opens 9pm to 1am, sees a mix of locals and pilgrims from

Bangkok, where Zimplex has built up a cult status. They gather round the small, curved bar and watch the shots being made right in front of them. Mind you, the interior of the bar, with its cross logo, subtle lighting, branded merchandise and raised DJ booth, is no less photo-worthy, which is perhaps no surprise given Tom's background in advertising – he won the 2011 Cannes Lion for his "Seafood Aquarium" campaign for LG. When I ask him about the name of the bar, he has an easy answer: "For us, it's simple. For you? Complex." [facebook.com/zimplex](https://www.facebook.com/zimplex)

## CHIANG MAI

# The slow life

The residents of Long Him Kao in San Khampaeng invite visitors to check out their homesteads. We've highlighted a few of our favourites

### Meena Rice Based Cuisine

Rice is a staple of Thai food, and Meena's organic, five-colour varieties are dished with an array of regional specialities including young jackfruit larb and crabmeat yellow curry. Rustic tables are scattered across an old farmstead, complete with 100-year-old rice barns and a lotus-filled lagoon. Locals pack in for the lunch hour – a sure sign this is the real deal. [facebook.com/Meena.rice.based](https://www.facebook.com/Meena.rice.based)



### Thong Dee

A mix of old and new treasures, this little shop is beautiful. Tops and handbags feature gorgeous Yao roidery. The collection of *phanh*, a fabric worn as a wrap skirt, includes examples from nearby hill tribes.

### Peung Jai

In a grand teak home, this nall shop is packed with Lanna-style cotton and linen clothing and accessories. Don't forget to peak in the vintage armoires, brimming with hand-embroidered tunics and quilted jackets.

## LAMPANG

# Caffeine hit

Three cafés serving top-notch coffee – and cake – in sleepy Lampang

### Go+ Café

Don't be fooled by the dilapidated exterior. Inside this local hangout, delicious house-roasted coffee and home-made cakes are plated in a garden setting. The Black Jasmine is a potent blend of fragrant jasmine tea and a high-octane shot of espresso. Impromptu tastings are held on Saturdays and Sundays. [facebook.com/gocafelP](https://www.facebook.com/gocafelP)

### Mahamitr

A hipster vibe pulses through this young and artsy hangout. The baristas are passionate about their craft, delivering lattes and cappuccinos with theatrical flair. [facebook.com/mahamitr](https://www.facebook.com/mahamitr)

### Baan-In-Tha

Cross the Wang River in the historic quarter to find this quaint garden café that sets the mood for a lazy afternoon of river gazing. The incredibly sweet ice coffee and Thai *cha khiew* (green tea) is a great antidote for the heat. A dizzying assortment of cakes and muffins is also on display. [facebook.com/baan-in-tha-coffee](https://www.facebook.com/baan-in-tha-coffee)

