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SPOTLIGHT ON

NORTHERN THAILAND

San Francisco-based **AFAR Ambassador Dan Tom** (@dantom) went deep into Northern Thailand in search of picturesque small towns, wildlife adventures, and cultural traditions. Here's a look at his favorite experiences, captured beautifully through his lens.

Golden Triangle

The Golden Triangle is at the very northern tip of Thailand, where it borders Myanmar and Laos. My favorite area activity was meeting the elephants at Anantara Elephant Camp & Resort in Chiang Rai. There's a longstanding Thai custom of living alongside elephants, and the camp goes to great lengths to be sure they're well fed and cared for.

I also loved my stay at Rai Saengarun Resort on the Mekong River bordering Laos. My bungalow had a breathtaking view of the river and mountains, and I could observe Thai farmers at work just beyond my doorstep.

Sukhothai

Literally "Dawn of Happiness," this province was the original kingdom of the Thais—and there's plenty of historical culture preserved here. Rent a bike in the afternoon as I did (when it's not as hot) and explore the ruins of Sukhothai National Park at your own pace.

To get creative like the locals, try your hand at Sangkhalok ceramics, using the techniques of the ancient Thais. I did my best to emulate the same style of painting, but could use more practice!

Nan

Rice farming and Buddhism are two enduring elements of life in Northern Thailand, and I got a better understanding of both in Nan, one of the most untouched places in the country.

Nan's two most impressive Buddhist temples are Wat Phumin, famous for its mural, "Whisper of Love Resonating the Earth or The Whisper," while the hilltop Wat Phra That Khao No makes a great place to watch the sun set over the city.



Unexpected Find: I spent a morning at Bangkok Airway's organic farm to experience how they harvest myriad kinds of rice and enjoyed a meal prepared with ingredients sourced from the farm. It's right next to Sukhothai Airport and, if you're intrigued, you can book a similar visit through Sukhothai Heritage Resort.

Find more inspiration at
tourismthailand.org



