

# INTERNATIONAL LIVING

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## News & Notes From Around the World



### THIS MONTH

Founded over 700 years ago, Chiang Mai nestles in the mountains of Northern Thailand, on the banks of the Ping River and the good climate has acted as a major draw for thousands of expats who call the city home. Temperatures range from the mid-teens C to mid-30s C, depending on the time of year.

What's most impressive though, is the choice of lifestyles on offer. Bang for buck, Chiang Mai is easily one of the best retirement havens in Southeast Asia. Testament to the variety of what's on offer are the sorts of folks moving here. You'll find retirees in great numbers, Australian, North American, European, and Japanese, but you'll also meet families on a year out with kids (there are good international schools) and lots of digital nomads—folks working on the internet with portable incomes.

Aussies report living well on their Age Pensions and you can make the most of little luxuries like massages and maid service that would only be a dream at home... for more see [page 20](#).



The towers of Bologna are nearly a 1,000 years old.

### Climb a Medieval “Skyscraper”

**B**ologna, Italy is renowned for its bolognese sauce (known as *ragù*) and its university, which is one of the world's oldest”, writes *IL* Contributor, Tricia Mitchell. “The northern Italian city also has notable architecture—pretty piazzas, porticoes and ancestors of the modern skyscraper.

“About 900 years ago, powerful families aiming to outdo one another built more than 100 medieval towers in Bologna. While most of the structures have since disappeared from Bologna’s skyline, about 20 remain. One pair—dubbed the *Due Torri* (Two Towers)—are a symbol of Bologna. At 97 metres, the 12th-century Asinelli Tower

(*Torre degli Asinelli*) is the taller of the two. The less-lofty Garisenda Tower (*Torre Garisenda*) is about 48 metres tall. The Garisenda Tower has the dubious distinction of being more off-centre than the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Dante even referenced it in his 14th-century poem, *The Divine Comedy*.

“If you aren’t claustrophobic or afraid of heights, you can climb to the top of the Asinelli Tower via its 498 steps. When you reach the top, you’ll be rewarded with extraordinary views of Bologna and its sea of red-brick buildings and terracotta rooftops.

Incredibly, the Asinelli Tower has survived lightning, accidental cannon-fire in 1513 and even World War II bombings. Tickets are €5 (\$7.74) and must be purchased in advance.

See: [Duetorribologna.com](#).”

### Free Hot Springs in Costa Rica

“On the slopes of the Arenal Volcano in Costa Rica is one of this lush tropical country’s most popular tourist destinations,” writes *IL* Coastal Correspondent Kathleen Evans.

“It’s something of a natural adventure playground, offering ziplining to skywalk jungle treks, whitewater rafting to horseback riding. Many hotels encircle the volcano and feature hot tubs, pools and swim-up bars, taking advantage of the warm mineral waters naturally heated by the volcano. Upscale hotels offer quite costly day passes for guests who want to enjoy their relaxing waters, restaurants, and bars.

“However, in-the-know expats and locals know of free hot

springs just west of the Tabacon Resort on the main road around Arenal. You can park at the side of the road (often there is an attendant there who will watch your car for a small tip) and follow a short footpath to a viaduct by the springs. If you continue through the river upstream for just a few minutes and climb up a small waterfall, you will then find natural hot tubs and small massaging rapids free of charge all day long.

“And if you would like to enjoy some drinks and snacks while you bubble away your aches and pains, you can go with the old-fashioned picnic option by bringing your own esky. It’s a budget alternative to the swim-up bar, but just as satisfying.”

### MICHELIN-STAR BARGAIN

Dining at a Michelin-starred restaurant doesn’t have to be pricey,” writes *IL* Correspondent Tricia Pimental. “While the Alain Ducasse restaurant in the Plaza Athénée in Paris offers a three-course meal for about \$645 I say why not try [Eleven](#) in Lisbon? There you can savour a starter of duck *foie gras* with orange and rum, follow it with a main course of Portuguese seafood and shellfish in red wine, and your total bill will be \$144. That’s a saving of \$501 over Alain Ducasse.”