

A PRACTICAL MOTORCYCLE
GUIDE FOR WOMEN

RIDING THAILAND



FOR EVERY ADVENTUROUS FEMALE BIKER WHO
FEELS DRAWN TO THAILAND

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT ME

Hi, I'm Baška – a rider, tour guide and friend behind this ebook.

I first came to Thailand in **2016**, thinking it would be “just one trip”. It wasn't. Since then, I've been coming back **almost every year** – first for one or two months at a time, and eventually for **half a year each year**. Over time, Northern Thailand stopped being “a destination” and became a second home.

On a motorcycle, I've ridden **pretty much every mountainous province in the North**:

Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Son, Nan, Lampang, Phayao, Phrae, Uttaradit, Sukhothai, Loei, Phitsanulok and Phetchabun. Often more than once, in different seasons, on different motorcycles.

Off the bike (or on smaller scooters), I've also explored the South and the islands from a more classic “traveller” perspective: **Bangkok, Phuket, Khao Sok, Koh Lanta, Krabi, Koh Samui, Koh Phangan, Koh Tao** and their surroundings. Down there, I was more of a regular tourist with a scooter than a big-bike rider – for now.



People who travel with me often describe me as **easygoing and calm** – the person who doesn't panic when plans change, roads get weird, or the weather suddenly turns. I genuinely love **planning and logistics**, and I get a lot of joy from creating trips where others can show up, feel safe and enjoy the ride while I quietly take care of the details in the background.

One of my future projects is a **long motorbike trip from the very north of Thailand all the way down to Malaysia**, connecting everything I love about this country in one line. When that happens, this ebook will grow with it. I'll keep updating the guide as I ride more, learn more and discover new routes and details.

If you bought this ebook before a major update, you won't miss out – I'll send you the updated version so you always have the freshest information I can give you.



INTRODUCTION

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT ME

From a Ride Ready Day participant:

"What began as a nervous scooter rider cautiously weaving through traffic became a journey of a lifetime. We experienced the country the way locals do – raw, real, and full of wonder. Somewhere along the way, I discovered a kind of meditation that only exists on two wheels.

Her kindness set the tone for everything. All I had to do was show up and enjoy the ride. She took care of the rest – finding the perfect coffee spots, taking me shopping to make sure I had the right gear, and offering thoughtful, practical advice on riding safely. She genuinely cared about the experience – and it showed."

Sasha

WHO IS THIS EBOOK IDEAL FOR

This guide is mainly for:

- riders who have **at least a couple of seasons** of experience at home,
- people who rode bikes abroad, but now want to try Asia,
- women who are confident enough on a motorcycle but unsure about Asian traffic.

I've guided women here who had **1–2 summer seasons** of experience, and they handled it beautifully.

They rode well, stayed within their limits and had a fantastic time.

HOW TO USE THIS EBOOK

This ebook is essentially **the brain of my trips put on paper** – the same practical know-how, structure and tiny details I use when planning real road trips for my clients. My goal is simple: to give you honest, experience-based information so you feel prepared, not overwhelmed... and so that your trip feels less like a gamble and more like a very good decision.

It's for **any woman, couple, or group of friends who are thinking about a road trip in Thailand**, whether you already ride a motorcycle or a scooter.

I focus mainly on **Northern Thailand**, because that's where I ride and guide the most. But a lot of the advice (culture, traffic, planning, mindset) is helpful for other regions too.

The chapters are organised so they **follow the natural timeline of your trip**:

- **Before you book anything**, consider expectations, safety, when to go, budget, and what kind of trip makes sense for you.
- **Before you arrive** – flights, documents, insurance, money, phone, basic prep.



INTRODUCTION

- **After you land**, what to do first, how to ease into the local vibe.
- **Packing and gear**, what you actually need on a moto trip here (and what is just dead weight in your bag).
- **Riding & traffic**, how things really work on the road, renting a bike, safety, what to watch out for.
- **Planning your route**, how to put it all together so your road trip fits your time, energy and experience.

Throughout the ebook, you'll find:

- **Checklists** – to turn “I hope I didn’t forget anything” into “OK, this is handled.”
- **Questions for reflection** at the end of chapters – to help you think about what *you* actually want from this trip, what feels safe for you, and where your limits are.
- **“Insider notes” and extra tips** – small things that usually don’t make it into generic travel blogs but matter a lot once you’re actually here.

You don’t have to read everything in one go. You can:

- Read it **front to back** if you’re starting to dream and want the whole picture.
- **Jump straight to riding, rentals or itineraries** if your flight is already booked and you’re in “OK, now what?” mode.
- Come back to the **checklists and reflections** right before your trip to fine-tune your plan and calm your brain.



INTRODUCTION

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A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing traditional Thai clothing including a blue patterned top and a red patterned skirt with a gold belt. She has her hands pressed together in a prayer position (Anjali Mudra) and is wearing gold jewelry including earrings, rings, and bangles. The background is a warm, golden-brown gradient with faint, concentric circular lines.

PART 1

BIG PICTURE & MINDSET

The background of the slide is a photograph of a tropical landscape at sunset. The sky is a vibrant orange and yellow, with the sun visible in the upper left corner. In the foreground, there are large green banana leaves, some of which are damaged or torn. A small tree with green leaves is visible on the left side. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

CHAPTER 1

THE BIG PICTURE

THE BIG PICTURE

Before we get into documents, rentals and routes, let's zoom out and look at the big picture: **Why Thailand at all?** Why here, and not Spain, Vietnam or some other beautiful place on the map?

In this chapter, I'll show you what makes Thailand so special for riders: the vibe, the roads, the prices, the seasons, the difference between North and South – and also a bit of my own story. My goal is simple: by the end, you'll know whether Thailand is just a nice idea... or whether it's the place you actually want to ride next.

WHY THAILAND?

I've travelled by bike through a lot of countries, over 20.

Every place I've been to has something amazing to offer – landscapes, roads, people, food, and little everyday moments. I'm genuinely that person who says: *"It's beautiful everywhere"* – and I mean it.

But when it comes to riding a motorcycle, Thailand is one of those places that keeps pulling me back.

Thailand on two wheels isn't for everyone – and that's precisely what makes it unforgettable.

Asia in general always felt a bit magical to me as a traveller: the exotic feel, colours, smells, temples, markets, and the fact that you can escape here during the European winter and ride in warm weather instead of staring at your bike in the garage.

The culture is fascinating, and daily life can be very affordable compared to Western countries. Because of this mix, I kept coming back – and thanks to online work, I could stay for months, not just a quick two-week holiday.

Over time, I had the chance to really taste a few different countries in Southeast Asia, and naturally, I started to compare them a bit.

THAILAND COMPARED TO ITS NEIGHBOURS

The countries around Thailand are also incredible for travel and adventure – Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia... each of them has its own charm and intensity.

But Thailand, for me, feels like a **slightly more "civilised" or developed version** of that Southeast Asian chaos. Not in a boring way – in a way that makes life and logistics easier, especially for first-timers.



THE BIG PICTURE

Compared to some neighbours, Thailand is generally richer, better connected, with stronger tourism and transport infrastructure.

If you've ever been to Vietnam, you know the soundtrack: *beep-beep, beep-beep,...and more beep*. In Vietnam, people often honk simply to announce: "I'm here."

In Thailand, the streets feel much calmer. You don't get that constant, nervous noise. The energy of the traffic is softer, more patient, less in-your-face.

Of course, it still depends where you go. You'll see **big economic and social contrasts**:

- simple village life and rice fields,
- and at the same time busy cities, shopping malls and hipster cafés.

That's what I like about it:

You can have very "local", raw moments – and a few hours later you're drinking a flat white in the most relaxing coffee shops along the road.

Because of all this, Thailand is an **easy entry point** for anyone who is a bit scared of Asia. In the bigger cities and tourist hubs, it can feel almost multicultural at times – not like some wild, overwhelming unknown.

WHAT I MISS WHEN I'M NOT IN THAILAND

Whenever I'm back in Europe, there are a few things I really miss.

The first one is **food**.

Yes, there are Asian restaurants in Europe, but most of them taste nothing like real food in Asia. Once you know how Thai food tastes *here*, the Western versions feel very... softened, distant, overprized.

I also miss the **simplicity of daily life**.

Here, you don't have to spend hours cooking if you don't want to. You walk out, choose one of many small restaurants or food stalls, and eat something fresh and tasty.

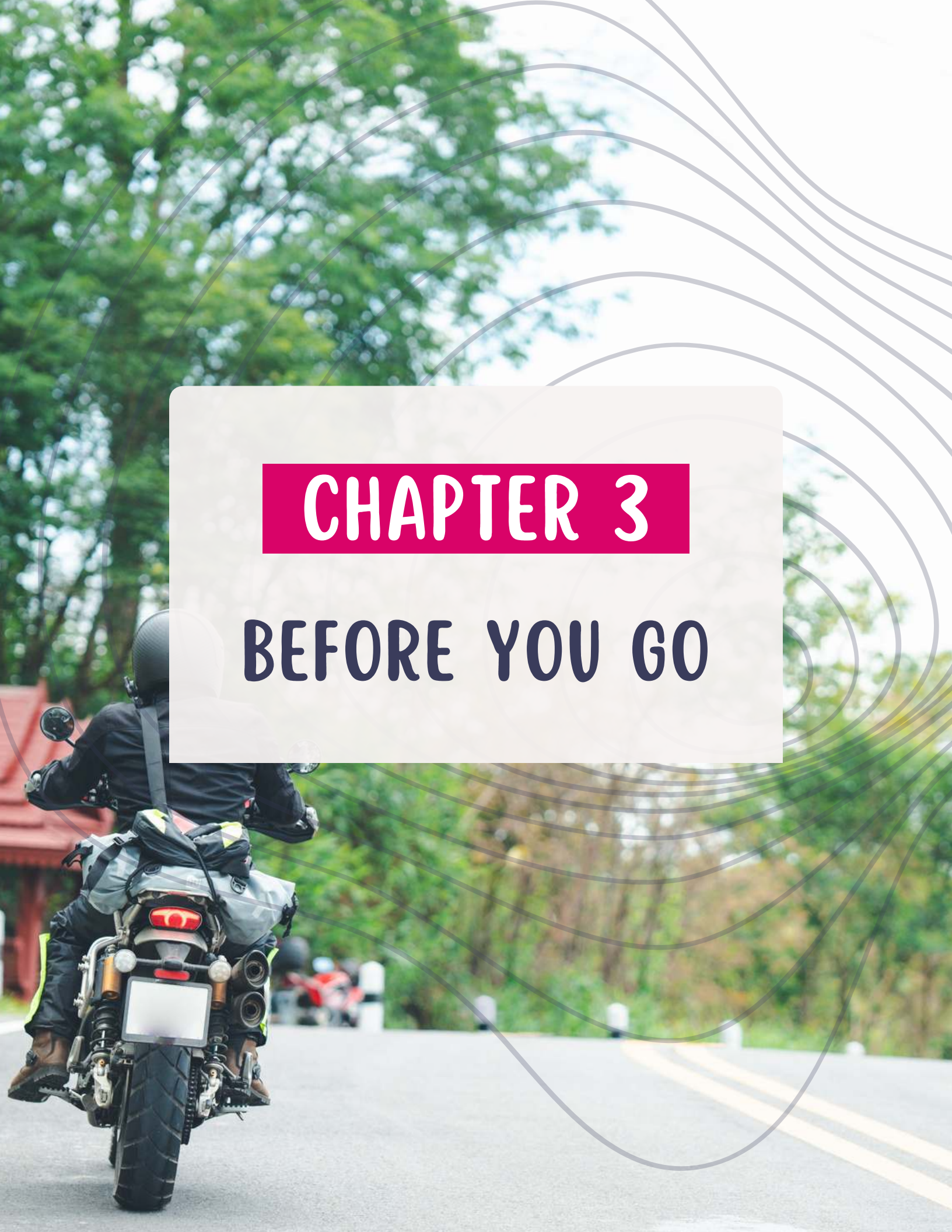
And then there's **coffee culture**, especially in Chiang Mai.

Sometimes it feels like there is a café on every corner. Not just "a place with coffee", but beautiful, creative spaces with character. I'm genuinely amazed almost every week by a new café I stumble upon – for its design, vibe, and coffee quality. It's a small thing, but it adds so much to everyday life or during the road trips.

A hand holding a green pen is pointing at a map. The map shows various geographical features like rivers, lakes, and roads. Overlaid on the map is a dark blue rectangular box with a pink banner at the top. The banner contains the text 'PART 2' in white. Below the banner, the text 'PREPARATION & PLANNING' is written in white. There are also some faint, stylized circular lines in the background.

PART 2

PREPARATION & PLANNING

A person wearing a black helmet and jacket is riding a motorcycle away from the camera on a paved road. The motorcycle has a white license plate and a red taillight. The background shows green trees and a clear sky. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the chapter title. The title 'CHAPTER 3' is in white text on a red rectangular background, and 'BEFORE YOU GO' is in dark blue text on the white background.

CHAPTER 3

BEFORE YOU GO

BEFORE YOU GO

This is the “slightly boring but essential” chapter. Here we sort out the things that decide whether your trip will be smooth or unnecessarily complicated.

Your Thai adventure starts long before you sit on the bike. A bit of smart planning can save you money, stress, and a lot of unnecessary airport acrobatics. Here’s a straightforward, rider-friendly guide to booking flights, and handling baggage.

WEATHER IN THAILAND: NORTH VS SOUTH

Two very different climates – and why it matters so much for riders.

Thailand may look small on the map, but when it comes to weather, the country is split in half. What feels like “Thailand” on the islands has almost nothing to do with what’s happening in the mountains. Understanding this difference will completely shape the quality of your trip – especially on a motorbike.

NORTHERN THAILAND

RAINY SEASON (JUNE–SEPTEMBER)

The rainy season sounds dramatic when you read about it online, but in reality, **it’s not endless rain.** Mornings are usually bright or partly cloudy. Afternoons often bring a short, heavy tropical rain. Showers come suddenly, disappear quickly, and return without warning.

It’s rare for it to rain all day. More common is a 20–40-minute downpour that cools the air and disappears as quickly as it arrives. The rain is warm, the mountains turn deep green, and the countryside looks alive.

Roads dry quickly, but mud and wet leaves can appear on corners – just something to ride with awareness.

Humidity is high, temperatures stay around 25–32°C, and the whole North feels lush and vibrant. It’s not the “perfect riding window,” but it is a beautiful, dramatic, cinematic version of Thailand.

THE COOL, DRY SEASON (NOVEMBER–JANUARY)

November and December are the sweet spots of the entire year. The air feels crisp, the skies stay blue for weeks, the humidity drops, and the mountain views look like someone turned up the contrast. This is also when riding feels effortless – no sweating under layers, no slippery roads, just clean air and perfect visibility.

BEFORE YOU GO

Days sit around 20–28°C, and riding is comfortable from morning till late afternoon. Evenings cool down quickly, often to around 15°C, and occasionally even lower. On the bike, that feels *properly* cold, so a warm layer isn't just "nice to have", it's essential.

It's an amazing time to be in the mountains, but keep in mind: **this is also peak demand season – bikes book out fast.**

THE COOL, DRY SEASON (NOVEMBER–JANUARY)

October is the transition month – the rains begin to fade, the sky opens up again, and the air quality becomes *its absolute best* of the year. Everything is freshly washed, clean, and **intensely green.**

You'll still get the occasional shower – sometimes one, sometimes two in a day – but the trade-off is absolutely worth it:

- the landscape looks breathtaking,
- traffic is quieter,
- rentals are plentiful,
- accommodation is easier to book,
- temperatures are warm but not too humid.

For many riders (me included) – October is a hidden gem. The rain risk exists, but the reward is huge.

HOT, DRY AND BURNING SEASON (FEBRUARY - MAY)

February is beautifully warm, and riding is still fantastic... but it's also the moment when the dry season becomes very dry. The temperature rises, humidity drops, and by early February the first signs of the burning season appear.

March–April is when it becomes severe. The smoke affects visibility, the mountains lose their shape behind a grey-brown haze, and for some people the air quality is physically irritating. It's the only period of the year **I genuinely don't recommend riding in the North.**

Once the rains return, everything clears, but until then, the North loses a lot of its magic.

Quick Summary:

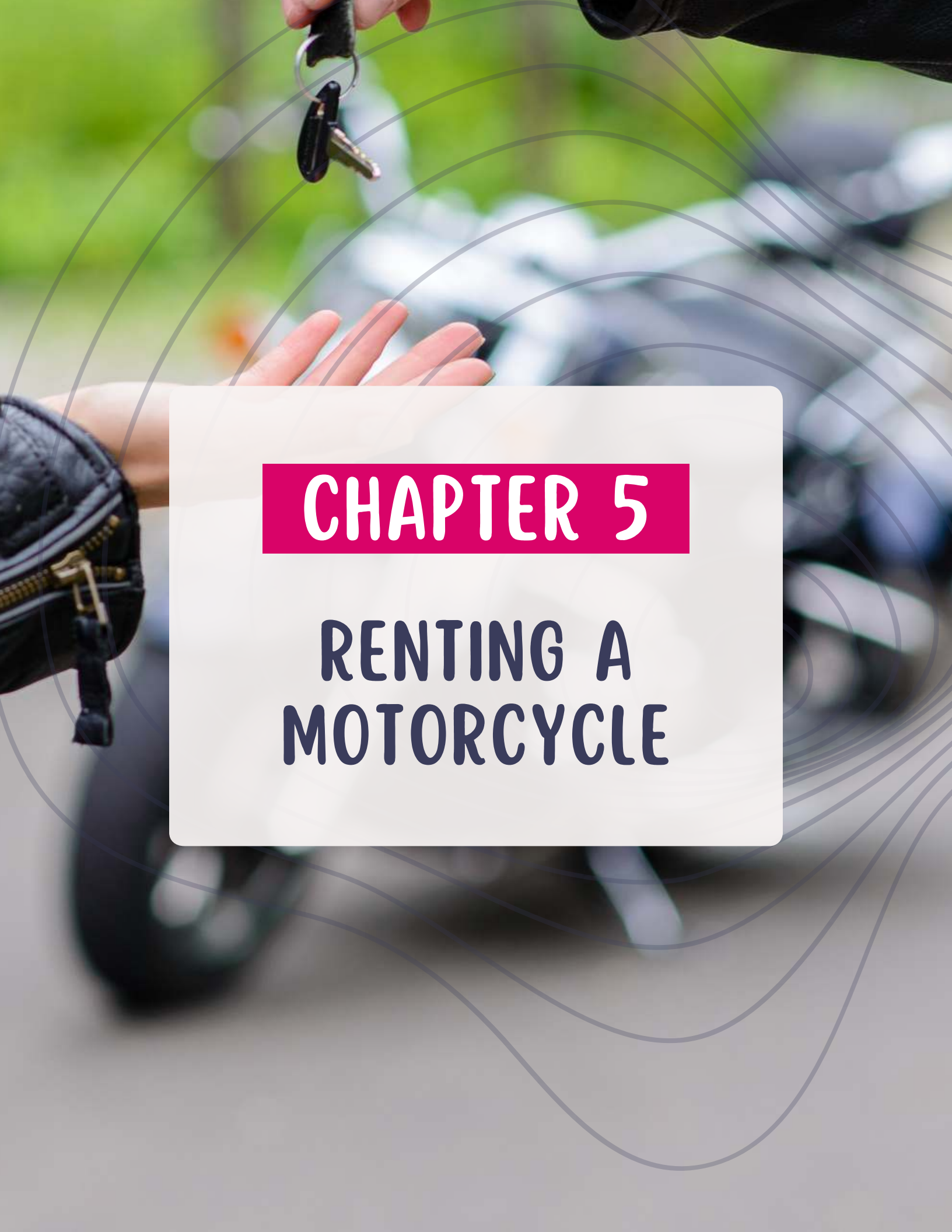
- **Nov–Dec:** the golden window – clear, dry, cool, perfect for riding.
- **Jan–early Feb:** still excellent, warmer, but dry.
- **Late Feb–Apr:** Burning Season – avoid it if you can.
- **May–Sep:** rainy but beautiful – showers come and go, lush landscapes, fewer tourists.
- **October:** clean air, warm weather, regular but short rain

A close-up photograph of a motorcycle's front end. The image shows the chrome headlight, a side mirror reflecting a park scene, and the front wheel with a disc brake. The motorcycle has a red frame and a silver front fender. A dark blue semi-transparent rectangle is overlaid in the center, containing the text 'PART 3' and 'BIKE & GEAR'.

PART 3

BIKE & GEAR

Limited



CHAPTER 5

RENTING A MOTORCYCLE

RENTING A BIKE

HOW BIKE RENTAL WORKS

Renting a motorcycle in Thailand has its own personality. It's simple, but not "European simple". Things work differently here – not worse, just... Thai.

You'll find all kinds of rentals:

- tiny scooter shops with low daily prices,
- specialised big-bike rentals that focus purely on 300cc + models,
- and then mixed rentals with scooters + a few big bikes.

HOW TO CHOOSE A GOOD RENTAL SHOP

A dedicated big-bike rental is usually a very good sign. Shops that specialise in adventure and touring motorcycles tend to maintain their bikes properly – regular servicing, decent tyres, working brakes, clean chains, and predictable handling. They attract riders who travel long distances, which naturally pushes the owners to keep their fleet in shape.

Mixed scooter + big-bike rentals exist too, and they're not necessarily bad – just inconsistent. Scooters are their priority, so the few big bikes they have are sometimes older or less frequently serviced. Some are totally fine; others need more love. It's a case-by-case situation.

If you're planning real mountain trips, it's worth choosing a shop where big bikes aren't an afterthought, but the main business.

READING THE VIBES

You can tell a lot in the first two minutes. Look around.

Is the place clean and organised? Are the bikes parked neatly, chains oiled, tyres fresh, helmets appropriately stacked?

Does the staff speak to you with clarity, patience, and a sense of responsibility? Or do they brush off your questions with "no problem, no problem" even when something clearly is a problem?

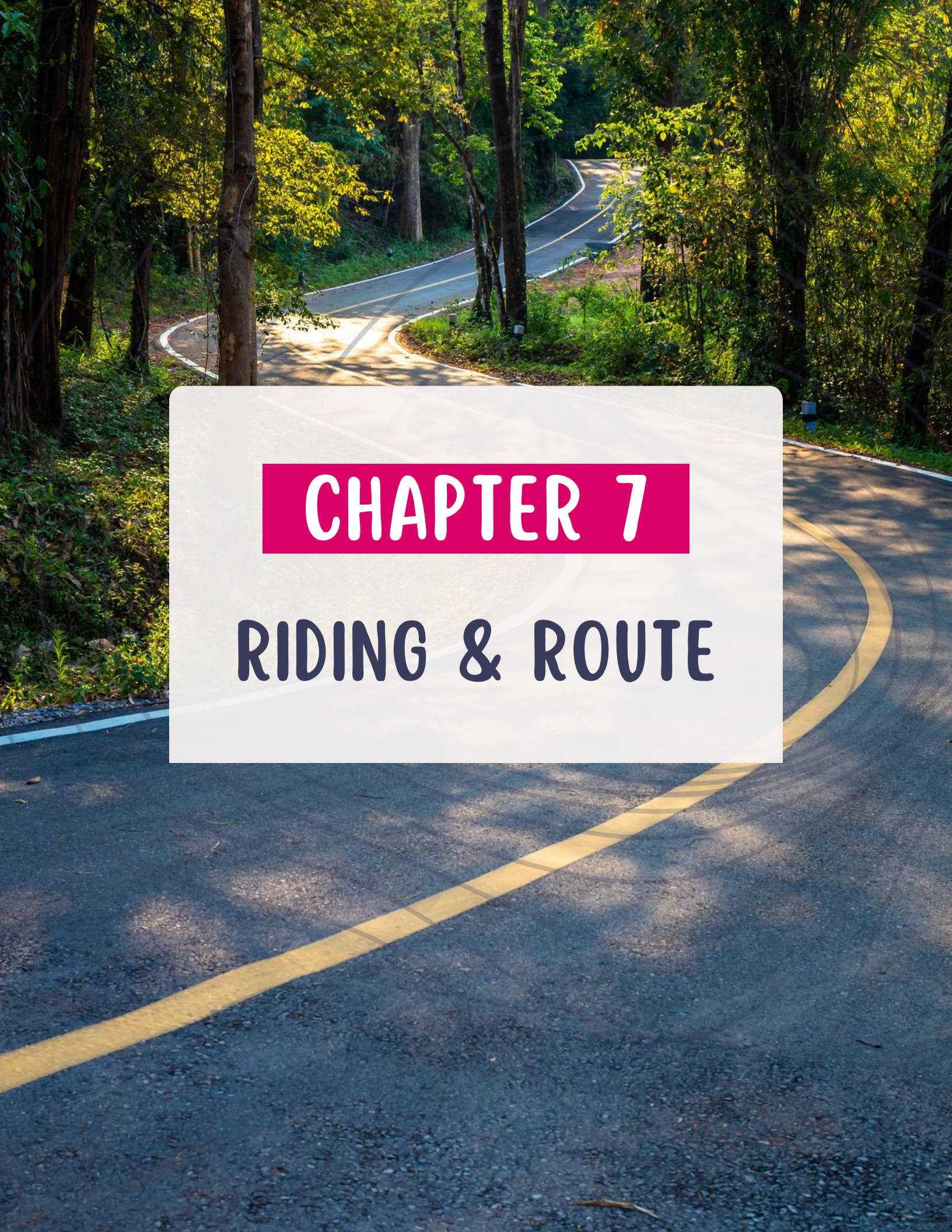
Good rental shops are calm, helpful, and confident in their bikes. They don't rush you, they let you look around, they answer honestly, and they take pride in their fleet.

Bad rentals try to get you on the bike as fast as possible.



PART 4

ON THE ROAD



CHAPTER 7

RIDING & ROUTE

RIDING & ROUTE

This is where we move from theory to **what it's actually like to ride on Thai roads**. Here we'll talk about how traffic "thinks" in Thailand, what to expect in cities vs mountains, how to handle endless corners, and how to stay relaxed and safe even when things get messy.

HOW TRAFFIC WORKS IN THAILAND

Riding in Thailand is not like riding in Westernised countries – and that's precisely why it's so unforgettable.

The rules exist, but they live in a different rhythm. The flow is softer, the pace is flexible, and the logic of the road isn't written in law books but in the everyday dance between scooters, cars, dogs, and people just trying to get where they're going.

There are two ways to learn how Thai traffic works: Ride into it blindly and figure it out the hard way, or **learn from someone who already went through the hard way – so you don't have to**.

In this chapter, I want to give you the kind of knowledge you only get after years of riding here, from countless kilometres on real Thai roads in sunshine, in rain, on perfect mountain asphalt, in tiny village lanes, across Chiang Mai traffic at rush hour.

If you've never ridden in Asia before, some things will feel unusual. Not wrong – just different. My goal is to give you the useful tips and small "how it works" details upfront, so you can picture what to expect and start riding with confidence from day one.

You don't need to be fearless. You need to be prepared – and that's what this chapter is for.

BASIC DIFFERENCES FROM EUROPE

Thailand isn't chaos – it's a different logic. A slower, softer, "we all somehow fit" logic.

- **Traffic runs on the left.** Everything you do – turns, roundabouts, lane choice – must flip in your brain.
- **Scooters are everywhere.** Cars expect them, overtake closely, and many scooters move unpredictably through tiny gaps.
- **Drivers don't change direction too quickly.** They assume a scooter might be in their blind spot at any moment (because... it usually is).
- **Helmets:** Many locals ride without one or with a useless half-helmet.



RIDING & ROUTE

- **Old vehicles & black smoke:** some pickups and trucks are so worn out they'd never pass a technical inspection in Europe. When they suddenly puke a thick cloud of exhaust, you can barely breathe for the next 50 metres.
- And a big plus: **Passing might be easier than back home.** That is because cars usually drive more slowly in the mountains and do not rally.

HOW THE ROAD FEELS

One of the best surprises in Thailand is the road quality. Outside the deepest jungle and the most remote mountain tracks, the asphalt is genuinely excellent. In many places even better than what you'll find in parts of Western countries. Smooth, clean, well-maintained and an absolute joy to ride.

Sometimes I still catch myself wondering how this is even possible. You'll pass through tiny agricultural villages with simple wooden houses, dusty front yards, chickens wandering freely... and then realise you're riding on asphalt that feels smoother than half of Europe. The contrast is almost surreal – humble surroundings and truly premium roads. It's one of those little Thai mysteries I'll never stop appreciating.

Of course, no country offers perfection everywhere. From time to time you may come across a short stretch of gravel, a section of concrete "panel road," a bit of debris or mud after heavy rain, or that classic Thai moment: kilometres of flawless tarmac followed by one unexpected pothole.

But here's the paradox that every rider eventually notices: **the further you go from civilization, the better the roads seem to get.**

Remote mountain routes are often silky smooth, beautifully maintained, and almost empty – the kind of roads that make you smile under your helmet because it feels like they were made just for you.

NORTHERN THAILAND AND THE MOUNTAIN ROADS

Northern Thailand is one of those rare places where the roads themselves become an adventure.

Forget the typical "amazing curves for over 50 km and then boring stretch to get back home" feeling you can get in many countries. Here, the curves (almost) never stop.

The mountains around Chiang Mai, Chiang Dao, Mae Taeng, Mae Hong Son, Nan and Phetchabun offer **hours and hours of pure, uninterrupted flow riding.** Some days, you can spend the entire daylight on winding roads without seeing a single straight section longer than a few seconds. It's not an exaggeration – it's the nature of this region.

If you plan your route well, you can ride thousands of curves in a single morning, and over the course of a week, more corners than in some countries in an entire season.

