

Meet the Thai Dinosaurs



Meet the Thai Dinosaurs

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A Special Message From Dr. Manitkoon

Are there dinosaurs in Thailand?

Most Thai people would likely answer, “Yes,” even if they couldn’t say exactly how many. But ask someone from outside the country, and you might be met with surprise. Few realize that Thailand ranks among the leading countries in Asia for dinosaur discoveries.

This book presents fascinating insights into 13 officially named dinosaur species unearthed right here in Thailand. Carefully reviewed by experts and brought to life through vivid illustrations and accessible storytelling, it’s crafted for readers of all ages and backgrounds.

For over four decades, paleontologists have been exploring Thailand’s landscapes in search of ancient life. From field excavations to fossil preparation labs, and through the painstaking process of research and publication, the journey has been anything but easy. It requires passion, perseverance, and an insatiable curiosity about the distant past.

Thanks to the dedication of generations of scientists, we now have a remarkable window into a prehistoric world that once thrived beneath our feet. **With a new wave of paleontologists continuing the work, the next exciting discovery might be just around the corner.**

Enjoy reading

Sita Manitkoon, Paleontologist and NatGeoExplorer

Welcome to the World of Thai Dinosaurs!

When people think of Thailand, they often think of beautiful temples, golden beaches, and delicious food. **But did you know that Thailand is also home to something truly amazing—dinosaurs?**

Millions of years ago, many different kinds of dinosaurs lived in what is now Thailand. Over time, their bones turned into fossils and stayed hidden underground. Thanks to the hard work of paleontologists, many of these fossils have now been found. Some of the dinosaurs discovered here are so rare, they have never been found anywhere else in the world!

Let's meet the different types of dinosaurs, learn their names, see what they may have looked like, and find out where they were discovered in Thailand!

I hope this book makes you curious about the world of dinosaurs and excited to learn more about science and nature. Most of all, I hope it helps you see how important these fossils are and inspires you to help protect them so that people everywhere can enjoy and learn from them for many years to come.

Let's Learn About Dinosaurs

Dinosaurs (Dinosauria) were fascinating creatures that lived millions of years ago. Although they are no longer alive, scientists called *paleontologists* study their bones to discover what dinosaurs looked like, how they moved, and what their world was like. To understand dinosaurs better, paleontologists **sort them into groups based on their bones**. Some dinosaurs walked on two legs, while others used four. Some were fierce meat-eaters, called *carnivores*, and others were peaceful plant-eaters, called *herbivores*. One important way they classify dinosaurs is by **looking at their hips**, dividing them into **lizard-hipped dinosaurs (Saurischia)** and **bird-hipped dinosaurs (Ornithischia)**. With every new fossil discovery, we get closer to unlocking the secrets of these incredible animals from the ancient past!

Lizard-hipped dinosaurs - Saurischia



Bird-hipped dinosaurs - Ornithischia



The Story of Dinosaurs in Thailand



The first dinosaur fossil
found in Thailand

A long time ago, in 1976, a Thai geologist named Mr. Sudham Yaemniyom was working on the Uranium Exploration Project in Khon Kaen Province. While exploring the hills of Phu Wiang, he found something very special: a large piece of dinosaur bone! This amazing discovery caught the attention of scientists from France, and a team was formed to search for more fossils.

In 1981, the team hiked up a hill called Phu Pratu Teema in Phu Wiang. There, they found two giant dinosaur leg bones, along with dinosaur teeth and even fossils from other animals like crocodiles, fish, and turtles!

Then in 1982, they found a rib bone stuck in a big rock. When they dug deeper, they uncovered more dinosaur bones lying in neat layers. This exciting place became known as Phu Wiang Site 1, and it was the start of Thailand's great adventure into the world of dinosaurs!

Over the years, many fossils of dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals have been discovered in Thailand. These discoveries are not just exciting, they help scientists learn more about how life on Earth has changed over millions of years. They also bring visitors from around the world, turning fossil sites into tourist attractions that support local communities. Most of all, they inspire curiosity and spark a love for science! Let's go on a fun adventure together to discover fascinating facts about 13 incredible dinosaurs that once roamed the land of Thailand!

Dinosaurs Discovery Spots in Thailand



Isanosaurus attavipachi

Sauropodomorpha, Sauropoda

190 MYA



Chaiyaphum Province

Phuwiangosaurus sirindhornae



Sauropoda, Titanosauriformes

130 MYA



Khon Kaen Province



Minimocursor phunoienensis



Ornithischia, Neornithischia

150 MYA



Kalasin Province



Kinnareemimus khonkaenensis



Coelurosauria, Ornithomimosauria

130 MYA



Khon Kaen Province



Phuwiangvenator yaemniyomi



Coelurosauria, Megaraptora

130 MYA



Khon Kaen Province



Siamotyrannus isanensis



Tetanurae, Avetheropoda

130 MYA



Khon Kaen Province



Sirindhorna khoratensis



Iguanodontia, Hadrosauroidae

115 MYA.



Nakhon Ratchasima Province



Siamodon nimngami



Ornithopoda, Iguanodontia

115 MYA



Nakhon Ratchasima Province



Ratchasimasaurus suranareae



Iguanodontia, Hadrosauroidae

115 MYA



Nakhon Ratchasima Province



Siamraptor suwati



Allosauroidae, Carcharodontosauria

115 MYA



Nakhon Ratchasima Province



Psittacosaurus sattayarakii



Ceratopsia, Psittacosauridae

115 MYA



Chaiyaphum Province



MYA stands for Million Years Ago

What is a “Geopark”?

Geoparks are a magical place where we can learn about what Earth was like millions of years ago, and even discover dinosaur fossils! They show us where dinosaurs once roamed, and how the Earth has changed over the years.

But a Geopark isn't just about rocks and fossils; it's also a place where people learn, explore, and take care of nature. The local people can share their special stories, food, and traditions with visitors from all over the world!



Dinosaur Excavation Site at Khorat Geo Park

And guess what? If a Geopark is loved and protected by everyone, it can become a UNESCO Global Geopark: a world-famous wonder that's treasured by all!

Geopark Map of Thailand



Khon Kaen Geopark



Phuwiang National Park. This amazing place is called “Dinosaur Valley” because five brand-new kinds of dinosaurs were discovered right here! Scientists also found fossils of ancient creatures like freshwater snails and even prehistoric sharks. You can also visit Pha Chomtawan, a beautiful hill where you can watch the magical sea of mist roll in.



Phu Wiang Dinosaur Museum is the very first dinosaur museum in Thailand! Inside, you’ll find dinosaur bones, fossils, and fun displays that help you learn all about these amazing ancient creatures.



Traditional and Cultural Hubs: Khon Kaen Geopark is also full of culture and tradition! You can see how people live near Ubonrat Dam, visit the Thai Buffalo Village, or learn about farming at the New Theory Agriculture Learning Center.



Manchakiri dinosaur excavation sites There’s still so much to explore here. Scientists have just found more dinosaur bones hidden in the ground!



Siamosaurus suteethorni

Meet Siamosaurus—the first dinosaur ever discovered in Thailand!

The Siamosaurus was a big meat-eating dinosaur, and scientists found its sharp, pointy teeth back in 1986. The teeth looked a lot like crocodile teeth (**long and cone-shaped**) which gave them a big clue about what this dinosaur liked to eat... **fish!**

The species was named to honor a famous and influential Thai paleontologist, **Dr. Varavudh Suteethorn**.



Did you know..?

The Siamosaurus was a smart hunter! When there were no fish around, it could look for food on land too, maybe even catching small dinosaurs or flying reptiles called pterosaurs for a tasty snack!



Name meaning: Reptile of Siam

Location: Khonkaen province

Age: 130 million years ago, in the Early Cretaceous period

Size : 7-9 meters long

Diet: Carnivorous





Siamotyrannus isanensis

Meet the Siamotyrannus, one of Thailand's top dinosaur predators!

Siamotyrannus was a large meat-eating dinosaur with sharp teeth and strong jaws. It lived at the top of the food chain, meaning it didn't have many enemies and could hunt smaller animals with ease.

Its fossils were discovered in 1993 by Mr. Somchai Trainwichanon, a geologist from the Department of Mineral Resources. What an exciting find!



Name Meaning: Tyrant of Siam

Location: Khon Kaen Province

Age: 130 million years ago,

Early Cretaceous period

Size: 6.5-7 meters

Diet: Carnivorous



Did you know?

Unlike what many may think, the Siamotyrannus wasn't the grandfather of T-Rex. Instead, it was more like a distant cousin of another famous dinosaur called the Allosaurus.



Phuwiangosaurus sirindhornae

Fun fact!

Phuwiangosaurus could grow as long as a school bus (about 15 meters from head to tail)!

Even though it was huge, it only ate plants, using its long neck to reach leaves high up in the trees. It probably had to eat hundreds of kilograms of plants every day just to stay full!



Phuwiangosaurus was a gentle giant who loved to munch on plants!

It was the second dinosaur to be officially recognized in Thailand. In 1994, paleontologists from the Department of Mineral Resources gave it a very special name: “**Phuwiangosaurus sirindhornae**”. The name was chosen to honor Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, who has a strong interest in geology and paleontology, a wonderful way to celebrate her love for science and Thailand’s natural history.



Name meaning: Reptile of Phuwiang

Location: Khonkaen province

Age : 130 million years ago, Early Cretaceous period

Size: 15-20 Meters long

Diet: Herbivorous



Phuwiangvenator yaemniyomi

Phuwiangvenator was a fast and fierce meat-eating dinosaur. It belonged to a group called *Megaraptora* and was known for being a medium-sized predator. One of its most special features was its big thumb claws, which it may have used to fight or catch its food.

Even though scientists didn't find all of its bones, they did discover a shin bone that was 61.5 centimeters long... that's longer than a ruler! This tells us that Phuwiangvenator was probably one of the quickest hunters in the Phu Wiang valley.

Did You Know ?

The Phuwiangvenator is the oldest megaraptoran dinosaur ever found. Its hand claws were smaller than those of its dinosaur cousins, but it was still a clever and speedy hunter!



Name Meaning : Hunter of Phu Wiang

Discovery Site : Khon Kaen Province

Age : 130 million years ago, Early Cretaceous

Size : 6 meters long

Diet : Carnivorous



Khorat Geopark

Welcome to Khorat Geopark: Thailand's Newest Global Geopark!

Khorat Geopark, located in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, has been officially named a UNESCO Global Geopark. That makes it the second place in Thailand to earn this special title! Inside Khorat Geopark, there are many exciting places to explore and learn from. Let's go find out what makes this place so special!



The Cuesta Mountain Range is a line of rocky hills that looks like giant chopping knives! Made of sandstone, these ridges stretch over 1,700 kilometers, making it one of the longest of its kind in the world.



Key fossil sites include the *Ban Saphan Hin* and *Ban Krok Duean Ha* sites, as well as the fossil site of the *Maenam Mun River* elephants. The fossil in this site are from three eras, Cretaceous, Neogene, and Quaternary, and there are amazing treasures like dinosaur bones, ancient mammals, and even petrified wood.



The Petrified Wood Museum is in Mueang District and it's full of ancient treasures from Nakhon Ratchasima. Inside, you can see amazing things like petrified wood (that's wood turned into stone!), dinosaur bones, elephant tusks from long ago, and even fossils of fish and other animals.



Khao Khat Si Kiew is a special place where you can learn about rocks and the Earth's history. It has big hills made of coarse sandstone and some very cool shapes in the rocks—like round holes called “Kumbhalak”, which look like little pots carved by nature.



The Sandstone Buddha is the oldest reclining Buddha statue made from stone in Thailand. You can find it at Wat Thammachak Samaram in Sung Noen District. It was carved a long time ago during the Dvaravati period.



Ratchasimasaurus suranareae

Fun fact!

Ratchasimasaurus is the tiniest iguanodont found in Thailand, so tiny that many paleontologist agree that the fossil they studied likely came from a young dinosaur.

Have you ever seen a dinosaur that walked on two legs like a giant lizard? Meet Ratchasimasaurus!

Ratchasimasaurus was a plant-eating dinosaur from the iguanodont family. Unlike some of its cousins, it had more primitive features, so scientists think it moved around on its hind legs, using its strong back limbs to stroll through ancient forests. Its fossil was discovered in the Khok Kruat Formation at the Saphan Hin excavation site in Nakhon Ratchasima Province.



Name Meaning: Lizard of Nakhon Ratchasima

Discovery Site: Nakhon Ratchasima Province

Age: 115 million years ago, Early Cretaceous

Size: 3 meters long

Diet: Herbivorous



Siamodon nimngami

Siamodon was a strong plant-eater with jaws built for munching tough leaves.

This dinosaur belonged to the *iguanodont* family and lived a long time ago in what is now Thailand.

Its fossils were found at the Saphan Hin excavation site, part of the Khok Kruat Formation in Nakhon Ratchasima Province. Scientists later named it Siamodon nimngami, in honor of Mr. Wittaya Nimngam, who made the exciting discovery.

Did you know?

The Siamodon walked on four legs, but could stand on two to reach tall leaves—just like a dino giraffe!



Name Meaning: Tooth of Siam

Discovery Site: Nakhon Ratchasima Province

Age: 115 million years ago, Early Cretaceous period

Size: 6 meters long

Diet: Herbivorous



Siamraptor suwati

Meet Siamraptor—the fierce hunter from ancient Thailand

Siamraptor was a meat-eating dinosaur with sharp teeth and strong jaws. It belonged to a group of powerful predators called *carcharodontosaurs*. Its fossils were found in the Khok Kruat Formation, near Saphan Hin village in Nakhon Ratchasima Province. Siamraptor was the first big predator ever named from this area, and it was named to honor Mr. Suwat Liptapanlop.

Fun fact!

Siamraptor is a relative of Carcharodontosaurus, whose name means “shark-toothed lizard” because its sharp, blade-like teeth looked just like shark teeth!



Name Meaning: Thief of Siam

Discovery Site: Nakhon Ratchasima Province

Age: 115 million years ago, Early Cretaceous period

Size: 7-9 meters long

Diet: Carnivorous

Sirindhorna khoratensis



Meet Sirindhorna: the dinosaur with a beak made for chomping!

Sirindhorna was a plant-eating dinosaur from the *iguanodont* family. It was about 6 meters long—as long as a school bus!

Its fossils were found at the Saphan Hin excavation site in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, deep in the ancient rocks of the Khok Kruat Formation. Just like some other iguanodonts, Sirindhorna had a mouth with rough edges and a hard, beak-like covering, kind of like a bird's beak. That strong beak helped it chew tough plants, even bark and hard seeds from ancient trees called cycads!



Named in honor of Princess Sirindhorn

Discovery Site: Nakhon Ratchasima Province

Age: 115 million years ago, Early Cretaceous period

Size: 6 meters

Diet: Herbivorous

Did you know?

Scientists found parts of Sirindhorna's skull, jaws, and teeth—making it the most complete iguanodontian dinosaur ever found in Southeast Asia.



Chaiyaphum Geopark

Welcome to Chaiyaphum Geopark—a land full of rocks, fossils, and natural wonders!

Chaiyaphum Geopark became an official local geopark on August 11, 2021. Inside the geopark, you'll find amazing places to visit — from beautiful rock formations to ancient fossil sites. There's so much to explore and learn in this special corner of Thailand!

Fossil localities :

- Ban Pha Nang Sua dinosaur locality
- Wiman din Panda cave
- Non Tum dinosaur tracks



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Geological attractions :

- Phaya Chang Phueak Cave
- Tat Ton Waterfall
- Mo Hin Khao



Historical and cultural attractions :

- Prasat Prang Ku, an ancient Khmer-style temple



Name Meaning: Lizard of Isan

Discovery Site: Chaiyaphum Province

Age: 190 million years ago, Early Jurassic age

Size: 6.5 meters long

Diet: Herbivorous

Isanosaurus attavipachi

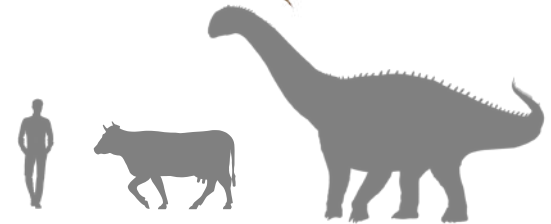


Isanosaurus may not be the biggest sauropod, but it was one of the very first!

This ancient plant-eating dinosaur is the oldest sauropod ever found in Thailand, and one of the earliest in the world. It lived during the Early Jurassic period, when giant dinosaurs were just beginning to appear. Its fossils were discovered near Ban Non Thaworn in Chaiyaphum Province, making it a key piece of the dinosaur puzzle in Thailand.

Fun fact!

A giant dinosaur arm bone (called a humerus) was found near where Isanosaurus was discovered. If it really belonged to Isanosaurus, it means this early dinosaur could have grown up to 12 meters long—as long as a big bus!



Psittacosaurus sattayarakii

Name Meaning: Parrot lizard

Discovery Site: Chaiyaphum Province

Age: 115 million years ago, Early Cretaceous period

Size: 1 meter long

Diet: Herbivorous



With a beak like a parrot and the body of a dinosaur, *Psittacosaurus* was one curious creature! *Psittacosaurus* was a small herbivore that belonged to the *ceratopsian* family, the same group as the famous *Triceratops*. Its parrot-like beak helped it bite and chew tough plants, and that's how it got its name "parrot lizard."

A special species called *Psittacosaurus Sattayarakii* was found in Thailand, and it was named to honor Mr. Nares Sattayarak, a Thai geologist who helped uncover its fossil.



Did you know?

The *Psittacosaurus* had special skin coloring, dark on top and light underneath!

This helped it blend into its surroundings, just like some animals do today, making it harder for predators to spot.

Kalasin Geopark

Welcome to Kalasin Geopark, a geopark in Northeastern Thailand home to the Minimocursor, one of Thailand's newest dinosaur discoveries! Kalasin Geopark is full of fascinating fossil sites like *Phu Kum Khao* and *Phu Noi*, where thousands of fossils have been found. You can also visit *Phu Faek Forest Park* to see real dinosaur footprints still stamped in stone!



▶ Geological learning sites

- Sirindhorn Museum
- Phu Nam Chan
- Dinosaur Museum at Ban Na Khrai



▶ Fossil sites

- Phu Noi excavation site
- Phu Faek Forest Park
- Phu Khum Khao



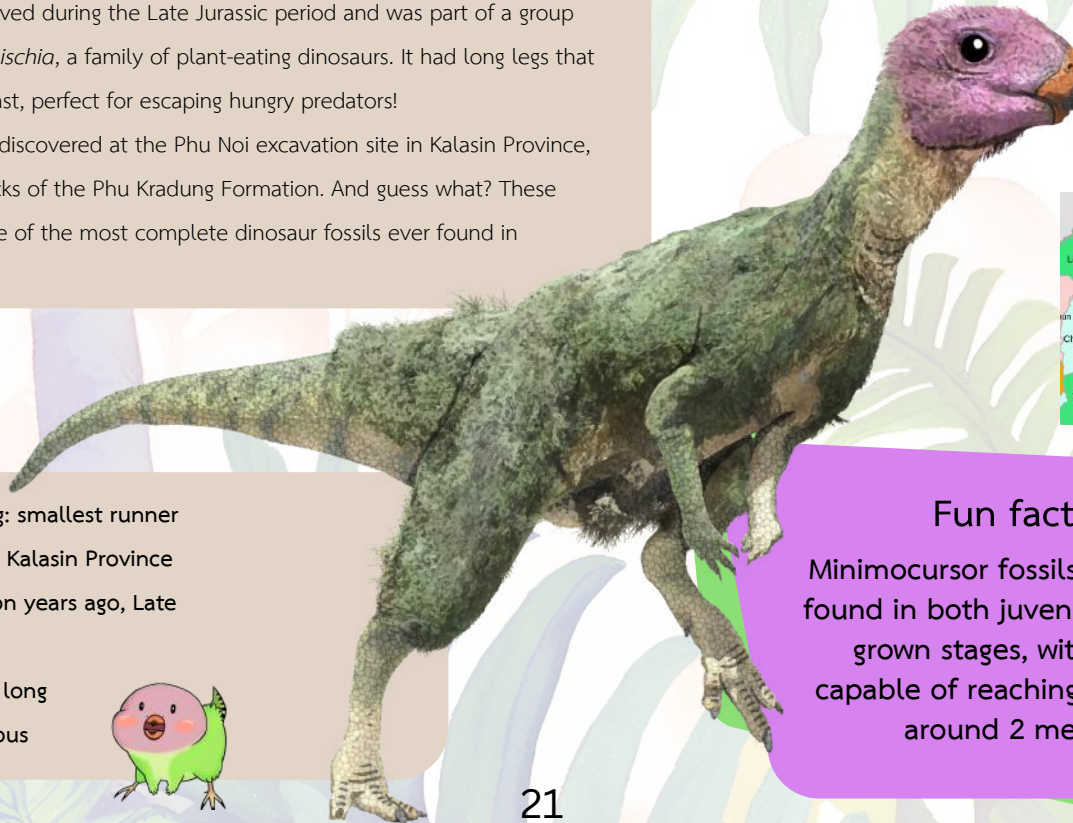
Minimocursor phunoiensis



Meet Minimocursor, the speedy little dinosaur from long, long ago!

Minimocursor lived during the Late Jurassic period and was part of a group called *Neornithischia*, a family of plant-eating dinosaurs. It had long legs that helped it run fast, perfect for escaping hungry predators!

Its fossils were discovered at the Phu Noi excavation site in Kalasin Province, deep in the rocks of the Phu Kradung Formation. And guess what? These bones are some of the most complete dinosaur fossils ever found in Southeast Asia!



Name Meaning: smallest runner

Discovery Site: Kalasin Province

Age: 150 million years ago, Late Jurassic age

Size: 2 meters long

Diet: Herbivorous



Fun fact!

Minimocursor fossils have been found in both juvenile and fully grown stages, with adults capable of reaching lengths of around 2 meters.

Vayuraptor nongbualamphuensis

Name Meaning : Wind Thief

Discovery Site : Nong Bua Lamphu
Province

Age : 130 million years ago, Early Cretaceous
period

Size : 4 meters long

Diet : Carnivorous



Did you know?

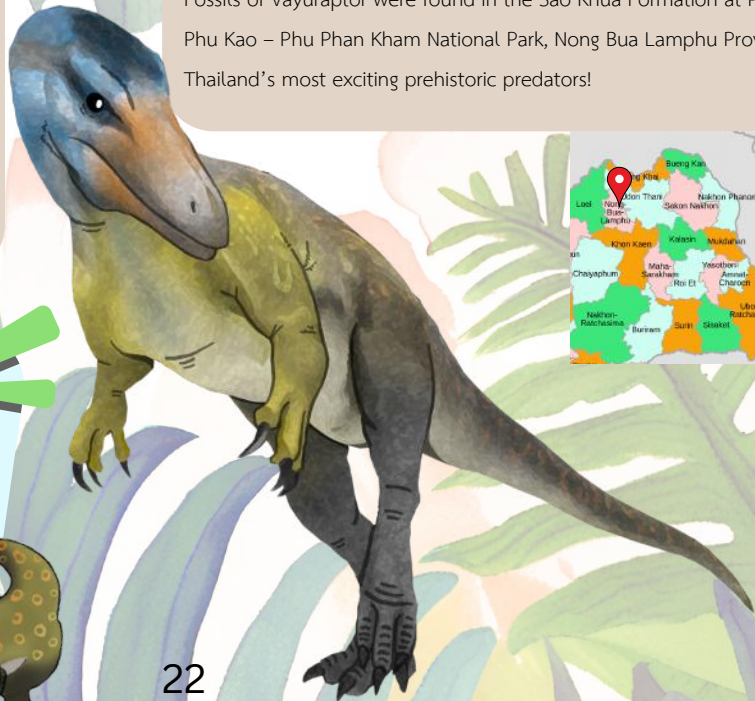
The name “*Vayuraptor*” was chosen to convey its agility, but it is not related to the famous raptors like *Velociraptor* in any way.



Vayuraptor had sharp claws and teeth that made it a skilled hunter in ancient Thailand.

This medium-sized meat-eating dinosaur belonged to the early *Megaraptora* group. With its long face, pointy teeth, and hook-like claws, it was built for chasing and grabbing its prey.

Fossils of Vayuraptor were found in the Sao Khua Formation at Phu Wat, located in Phu Kao – Phu Phan Kham National Park, Nong Bua Lamphu Province. It's one of Thailand's most exciting prehistoric predators!



More About Paleontologists...



Paleontologists are scientists who go on adventures to find fossils, including bones, teeth, footprints, or even tiny bugs turned to stone! They mix science and exploration, using biology and geology to figure out what ancient animals looked like, how they lived, and more.

They ask exciting questions like what a creature ate, where it lived, and if it walked on two legs or four (keep these in mind when you read!) Every fossil holds a clue to life from long, long ago.

To uncover these secrets, they explore cliffs, deserts, and caves, digging carefully and piecing together fossils like a giant puzzle.

Some study dinosaurs with sharp teeth or long necks, while others focus on ancient fish, plants, or creatures so tiny we need microscopes just to see them! Their discoveries help us understand the past, and even what might happen to our planet in the future.

So if you love exploring, digging, and solving mysteries, maybe one day you'll become a paleontologist too... and make a big discovery of your own!



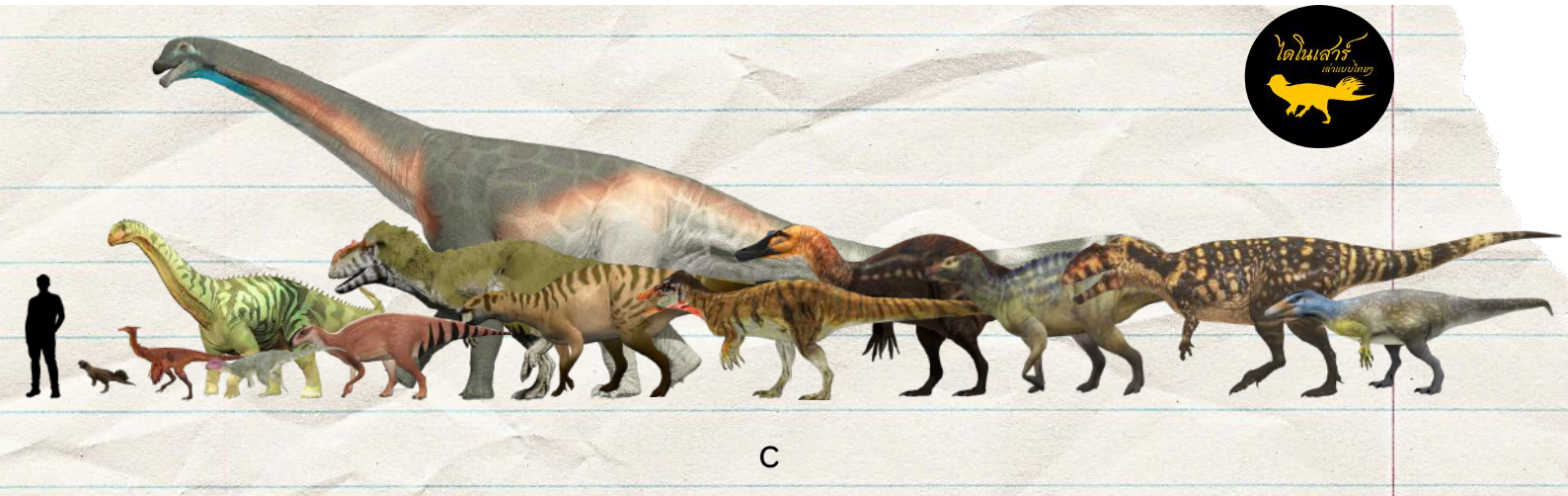
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The Artists Behind the Dinosaurs

Our love for dinosaurs started when we were young. We were amazed by the beautiful dinosaur pictures in books and began drawing them with great passion. We spent many hours practicing and enjoying the process. Now, through our drawings and stories, we hope to inspire children to use their imagination, be creative, and become interested in learning about dinosaurs and paleontology. We want to make the world of dinosaurs fun and exciting, and maybe even encourage some children to become future scientists or artists who share the same passion.

DinoThaiTeam



Meet the Author - Phongphol Damrongrat

Phongphol Damrongrat (Nathan) developed a passion for paleontology during his teenage years. At the age of 14, he embarked on an educational journey at the Webb School in California, a boarding school renowned for its Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology—the only accredited paleontology museum located on a high school campus in the United States. This exceptional environment provided Nathan with the unique opportunity to immerse himself in the study of paleontology.

As a dedicated member of the paleontology activity since his freshman year, Nathan explored many aspects of the field through the resources and opportunities available at the museum. He had the privilege of learning from Dr. Andrew Farke, the museum's director, and Dr. Mairin Balisi, the Augustyn Family Curator of Paleontology. Their guidance and expertise in paleontology deeply inspired Nathan, encouraging his enthusiasm for the study of prehistoric life.



Nathan's passion for paleontology deepened when he had the opportunity to meet Dr. Sita Manitkoon, a renowned Thai paleontologist and National Geographic Explorer. Inspired by Dr. Sita's work, Nathan joined his fossil excavation camps in Krabi and Surat Thani. During these camps, Nathan gained hands-on experiences in fossil excavation, sediment analysis, and the importance of preserving paleontological sites. These experiences further fueled his interest in the rich fossil heritage of Thailand and strengthened his desire to contribute to its promotion.

Nathan is dedicated to raising awareness about Thailand's paleontological treasures, aiming to inspire curiosity and appreciation among the Thai people, many of whom are unaware of these treasures. Through his dedication, Nathan hopes to bridge the gap between science and cultural heritage, encouraging a deeper connection between people and the ancient past that shaped the world we live in today.

Did you know Thailand is full of dinosaur treasures?

It all began with a surprising discovery in the hills of Phu Wiang in 1976, when scientists looking for uranium found something much cooler, **a dinosaur bone!**

Since then, Thailand has become one of the most exciting places in Southeast Asia to dig up dinosaur fossils. From towering plant-eaters to speedy meat-eaters, these ancient creatures help us learn about the past and inspire big dreams for the future.

In this colorful and fun book, you'll meet **13 amazing Thai dinosaurs** that once roamed the land.

You'll learn where they lived, what they ate, and what makes them so special.

Are you ready to take a step back in time and explore the prehistoric wonders of Thailand? Let's find out!

