Further Descriptions of the Jhanas

This is called the bliss of renunciation, the bliss of seclusion, the bliss of peace, the bliss of enlightenment. I say of this kind of pleasure that it should be pursued, that it should be developed, that it should be cultivated, that it should not be feared. (MN 66.21)

Abiding in the four form jhanas are called a pleasant abiding here and now (MN 8.4-7) Abiding in the four formless spheres is called a peaceful abiding (MN 8.8-11)

The four jhanas are the way to steady the mind internally, quite it, make it unified (ekodhi), and concentrate it. (MN 122.8)

According to Ananda, the Buddha praised the four jhanas. (MN 108.27)

“[The four jhanas] are the four kinds of life devoted to pleasure which are entirely conducive to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to tranquility, to realization, to enlightenment, to Nibbana.” (DN 29.24)

“And how has a monk attained the status of a deva? Here, monks, secluded from sensual desires… …fourth jhana. This is how a monk attains the status of a deva.” (AN IV.190)

First jhana:

“With seclusion from objects of attachment, with the abandonment of unwholesome states, with the complete tranquilization of bodily inertia, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhana. (MN 64.8)

In first jhana
1. one is “said to have blindfolded Mara, to have become invisible to the Evil One by depriving Mara’s eye of its opportunity. (MN 25.12; similar for other 7 jhanas)  
2. five hindrances are overcome and five jhanic factors are attained. (MN 43.19-20)  
3. belongs to the perturbable, (iñjita; to shake, move, stir, be disturbed; MN 66.22)  
4. unskillful intentions cease without remainder (MN 78.12)  
5. one ‘feels only feeling that is free from affliction.’ (MN 13.32)  
6. perceptions of sensual desire cease (DN 9)  
7. Speech stops (SN 36.11)  
8. bodily pain ceases (SN 48.4.10)
Second Jhana:
1. a perturbable state (MN 66.22)
2. skillful intentions cease (MN 78.13)
3. state of noble silence (SN 21.1)
4. a delight that is not sensual/of the flesh. (SN 36.29)
5. mental grief ceases (SN 48.4.10)

Third Jhana:
1. a perturbable state (MN 66.22)
2. delight ceases (SN 36.11)
3. pleasure that is not sensual (SN 36.29)

Fourth Jhana:
1. imperturbable state (MN 66.25)
2. described as the “attainment of the neither-painful-nor-pleasant deliverance of mind. (MN 43.26)
3. described as a state of supreme mindfulness and whose purity is due to equanimity. (MN 53.20)
4. an entirely pleasant world is realized (MN 79.27)
5. can dwell and talk to heavenly deities (MN 79.27)
6. non-sensual equanimity (SN 36.29)
7. breathing stops (SN 36.11)
8. on emerging from 4th jhana one walks, stands, etc, in bliss (AN 3.63)
9. has a mind that is purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability. (MN 4.27; 51.24)
10. can be used to attain 6 knowledges (i.e., supernormal powers plus awakening (AN 5.28)
11. a basis for attaining Three Knowledges (MN 4.27-33).

Possible problems with attaining the Jhanas:

In attaining any of the 8 “jhanas” an untrue person may think, “I have gained the attainment of the first [or any other jhana]; but these other bhikkhus have not gained the attainment of the first jhana.’ So he lauds himself and disparages others because of his attainment of the first jhana.” (MN 113.21-28)

If one’s “consciousness follows after the rapture and pleasure born of seclusion, is tied and shackled by gratification in the rapture and pleasure born of seclusion [of the first jhana], then [one’s] mind is called ‘stuck internally.’” [Same for other 3 jhanas] (MN 139.12-15)

If a monk dwells in a peaceful awareness-release (i.e. a jhana) and if he focuses on the cessation of self-identification but his mind does not leap up, grow confident, steadfast, or firm in the cessation of self-identification, then the cessation of self-identification won’t happen. [same for cessation of ignorance] (AN IV.178)