



Information by : Tourist Information Division (Tel. 0 2250 5500 ext. 2141-5)

Designed & Printed by : Tourist Information Division,
Marketing Services Department.

The contents of this publication are subject to change without notice.

2013 Copyright. No commercial reprinting of this material allowed.

December 2013



Tips on Thailand



Umbrella Painting, Chiang Mai



www.tourismthailand.org

1672
TOURIST HOTLINE

08.00-20.00 hrs. Everyday

Tourist information by fax available 24 hrs.

E-mail: info@tat.or.th

Website: www.tourismthailand.org





The Grand Palace, Bangkok

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
<i>The Land of Smiles,</i>	4
<i>Landscape,</i>	6
<i>History</i>	10
THAILAND IN BRIEF	12
<i>Location, Topography,</i>	12
<i>Climate,</i>	13
<i>Time, Population, Religion,</i>	14
<i>Language, Government</i>	15
USEFUL INFORMATION	16
<i>Immigration,</i>	16
<i>Tourist Information Services, Tourist Police, Medical Services,</i>	17
<i>Currency and Exchange Services, Business Hours, Tipping, Clothing,</i>	18
<i>Electricity, Export of Antiquities, Exchange Control,</i>	19
<i>International Airports and Airport Tax,</i>	20
<i>Visas Immigration Information, Tourist Visa Exemption,</i>	21
<i>Temporary Tourist Visa,</i>	22
<i>Visa Extension, Re-Entry Permits</i>	23
TRANSPORTATION	24
<i>Airport Transfer,</i>	24
<i>Getting around Bangkok,</i>	24
<i>Getting around Thailand</i>	24
COMMUNICATION	26
<i>Postal Services, Telephones,</i>	26
<i>International Roaming Mobile Phone,</i>	26
<i>Fax and E-mail, Internet Services</i>	26
DO'S & DON'TS IN THAILAND	27
<i>Special Advice</i>	27
SHOPPING ADVICE	28
<i>What to Buy, Shopping Tips, The Jewel Fest Club,</i>	28
<i>Packing and Shipping Services, VAT Refund</i>	29
USEFUL THAI WORDS	30



Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn), Bangkok

INTRODUCTION

The Land of Smiles

The Kingdom of Thailand is a predominantly Buddhist country, and one of the finest countries in the world in which to spend a vacation. Blessed with a tropical climate that is neither too hot, too dry, nor too wet in the monsoon season, it is possible to travel comfortably in Thailand at any time of the year.

Travellers, upon arrival in this land, are safe from the turmoil of life. Even in Bangkok, the Thai uniqueness in its food, architecture, language, customs and religion enliven and please the senses. Away from Bangkok, at the pristine sand beaches and emerald seas in the



Floating Market, Samut Songkhram

South, or in the northern mountains visitors can drowse their days away in a long deep dream of peace. The past is a forgotten thing, the present is heaven, and the future you can be leave to take care of itself.

The people inhabiting Thailand today share a rich ethnic diversity – mainly Thai, Mon, Khmer, Laotian, Chinese, Malay, Persian and Indian. Thai culture is evident everywhere in the Kingdom : in Buddhist rites which take place in numerous Thai temples, the succession of festivals that occur throughout the year, and the country markets where locals haggle, politely, for everything from food to clothing.



Songkran Festival in Pho Chai Na Pueng Temple, Loei

For travellers, Thailand is the only gateway in which to experience the special life of Southeast Asia. Due to the fact that the country has never been conquered, the Thai individuality blooms and remains vibrant. When the journey is over, the Kingdom will leave visitors with the desire to return again and again, as the smells, sights, and memories of the land and people remain indelible in their thoughts, for Thailand is a feast that you will always carry with you.



Thai Southerner, Yala



Rice Field, Chiang Mai

Landscape

Thailand is divided into four main regions detailed below:

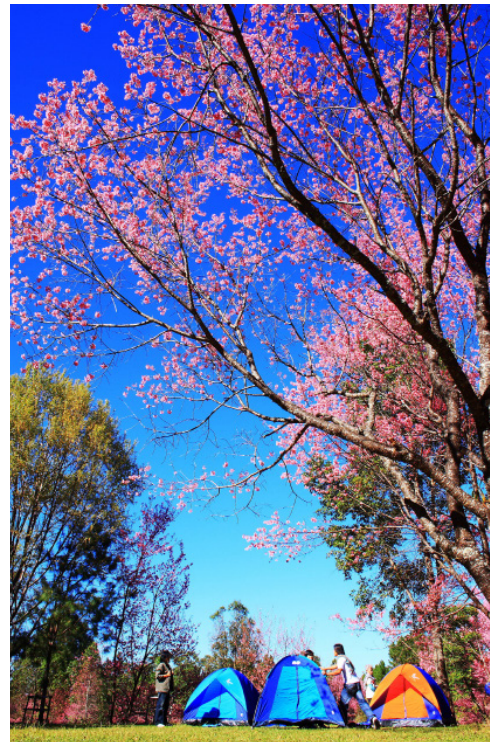
Central Plains : Nineteen provinces make up central Thailand with Bangkok as its centre. The rain-fed network of rivers and canals makes this the most fertile part of Thailand, supporting vast fields of rice, sugar cane and a variety of fruit. Some of the oldest settlements are found here along with some of the most dazzling temples, day and night markets, and historical ruins.



Chao Phraya River, Bangkok



Floating Market, Ratchaburi



Cherry Blossom, Chiang Mai

North : The North's hilly ranges are home to most of Thailand's hill tribe population. Slimly populated and undisturbed by modern man, these mountain ranges have vast rugged vistas, waterfalls, and footpaths where one can discover these remarkable features. It should be noted that the first true Thai kingdoms arose in what is now Northern Thailand. Hence, the region is endowed with a wide range of traditional culture and architecture, including some of the country's most majestic temples.



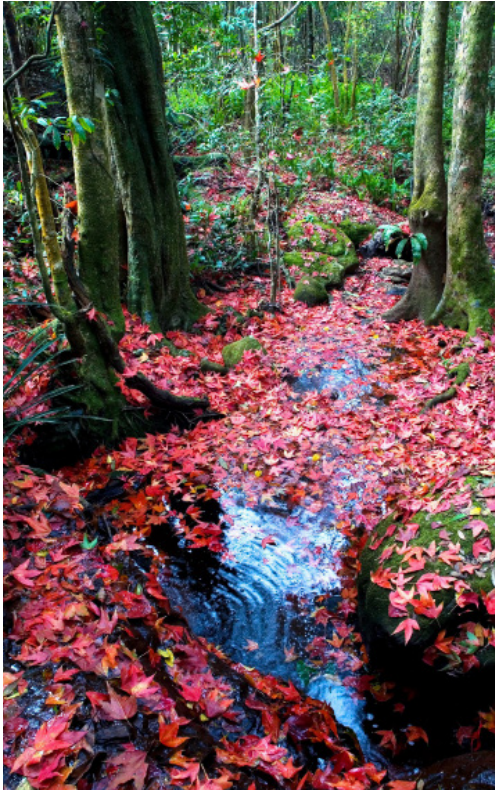
Wat Rong Khun, Chiang Rai



Ayutthaya Historical Park, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya



Doi Mae U-kho, Mae Hong Son



Phu Luang Wildlife Sanctuary, Loei



Mo Hin Khao, Chaiyaphum

Northeast : Known as the “I-San” region, traditional Thai customers continue to flourish in this area. The area rests on the Khorat Plateau. Compared to the rest of Thailand, the pace is slower and the people retain the same friendliness that is found throughout the Kingdom. Both Lao and Khmer influences can be seen and felt within the ancient temple ruins, distinctive food, architecture, and the region’s dialect.



Bai Sri Su Kwan ceremony in Phu Thai Village, Nakhon Phanom



Hong Island, Krabi



Phromthep Cape, Phuket

South : Bound by the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea, the South is a beach person’s paradise. Scattered islands off the coast accentuate this tropical haven. Brightly painted fishing boats catch a myriad of seafood, and long stretches of white sandy beaches beckon. The world seems brighter and more serene here, and one’s childhood dream of tropical paradise is within a few hour reach.



Khao Sok National Park, Surat Thani



Sukhothai Historical Park, Sukhothai

History

The earliest archaeological signs of human habitation in Thailand can be found in the Northeast hamlets of Ban Chiang and Ban Prasat where evidence of rice cultivation dates back to 4000 BC (China by contrast was growing and consuming millet at that time). Thailand is also credited for fostering the world's earliest Bronze Age civilization during this period.

Over the next several thousand years, three major groups of people migrated south from China into present day Thailand - the Mon, Khmer and Thai. The Mon settled in present day Myanmar, the Khmer in present day Cambodia, and the Thais by 1200 had established dominance in three northern Thailand states : Lanna, Sukhothai and Phayao.

Sukhothai (Dawn of Happiness) is regarded as the first truly independent Thai state and the birthplace of Thai culture. The Sukhothai era, which declared its independence in 1238, saw the Thais' gradual expansion throughout the entire Chao Phraya River basin, the establishment of Theravada Buddhism as the dominant religion, the creation of the Thai alphabet and the first true Thai art forms including painting, music, architecture and literature.

The Sukhothai era declined in the 1300s and eventually became a vassal state of Ayutthaya, a dynamic kingdom further south. Founded in 1350, Ayutthaya, approximately 86 kilometres north of Bangkok, was regarded by both Asians and Europeans as one of the most progressive and wealthiest kingdoms on the planet during that period.



Ayutthaya Historical Park, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya

During Ayutthaya's 417 year of prominence, the Thais brought their distinctive culture to fruition, ridding their lands of Khmer presence and fostering contact with Arabian, Indian, Chinese, Japanese and European power, especially Portugal and Holland.

Ayutthaya's destruction in 1767 by the Burmese was a severe blow to the Thais. However, the Burmese could not maintain control of the Kingdom. In 1796, King Taksin ruling from the new capital in Thon Buri, on the banks of the Chao Phraya River, regained control of the Kingdom. In 1782, Phra Bat Somdet Phra Phuttha Yotfa Chulalok Maharaj, the first ruler of the Chakri Dynasty, known as King Rama I, moved the royal capital across the river to Bangkok.

Two Chakri monarchs. King Mongkut (Rama IV), who reigned between 1851 and 1868 and his son, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), who reigned from 1869 to 1910, saved Thailand from Western colonization through brilliant diplomacy and selective modernization. It is largely due to these two monarchs that Thailand was able to retain dominance over its own destiny without the interference of foreign powers.

Today, Thailand has a constitutional monarchy. Since 1932, Thai kings, including the present monarch, H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej, have exercised their legislative powers by means of a cabinet headed by a prime minister and their judicial powers through the lower courts.

THAILAND IN BRIEF

Location

Situated in the heart of Southeast Asian mainland which covering an area of 513,115 square kilometres and for centuries known by outsiders as Siam, Thailand borders the Lao PDR and Myanmar to the north, Cambodia and the Gulf of Thailand to the east, Myanmar and the Indian Ocean to the West and Malaysia to the south.



Phu Chi Fa, Chiang Rai



Doi Tung, Chiang Rai



Thale Noi Waterfowl Reserve, Phatthalung

Topography

Thailand is divided into 4 natural regions:

- The mountainous North, with its profusion of multi-coloured orchids, fascinating native handicrafts and winter temperatures are sufficiently cool to permit cultivation of temperate fruits such as strawberries and peaches.
- The high Northeast Plateau, which still jealously guards its many archaeological and anthropological mysteries.

- The Central Plain, one of the world's most fertile rice and fruit-growing areas with colourful traditional culture and way of life as well as the sandy beaches of the East Coast and vibrant cosmopolitan Bangkok.

- The peninsular South where the unspoiled beaches and idyllic islands complement economically vital tin mining, rubber cultivation and fishing.

Climate

The climate is tropical with an average high temperature of 35°C and low of 25°C in Bangkok. There are three overlapping seasons; the monsoon that lasts from May to September, from when it turns moderate to cool until February and warms up until April. Temperatures are highest in March/ April and lowest in December/ January.



Phu Toei National Park, Suphan Buri



Tao island, Surat Thani

Time

Time in Thailand is 7 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT + 7)

Population

Thais are well-known for their friendliness and hospitality. A large majority of over 64 million citizens of Thailand are ethnic Thai, along with strong communities whose ethnic origins lie in China, India and elsewhere. About 10 million people reside in the capital city of Bangkok.

Religion

Buddhism, the national religion, is the professed faith of 95% of the population. Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and others are embraced by the rest of the population. There is absolute religious freedom. The King of Thailand, under the constitution and in practice, is patron of all major religions embraced by the people.



Samui Island, Surat Thani



Pathum Wan Intersection, Bangkok



Phu Kradueng National Park, Loei

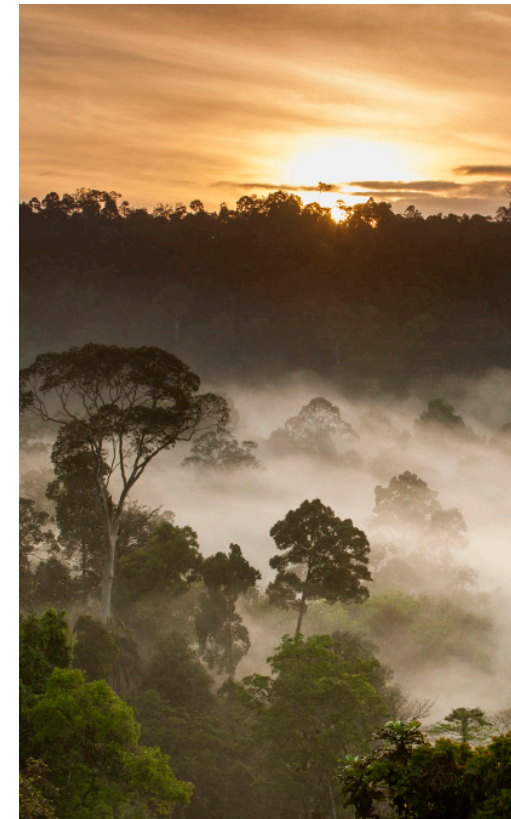
Language

The official national language, spoken by almost 100% of the population, is Thai. English and some Chinese dialects are usually understood in business circles. However, English is widely spoken and understood, particularly in Bangkok and other major cities. Thai-English road signs are also found nationwide.

Government

Thailand has had a constitutional monarchy since 1932. Parliament is composed of 2 houses, The House of Representatives and the Senate. Both representatives and senators are elected by the people. A prime minister elected from among the representatives leads the government.

The country is divided into 77 provinces. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration comes under an elected governor. Appointed provincial governors administer the other 76 provinces (Changwat), which are divided into districts (Amphoe), sub-districts (Tambon) and villages (Mu Ban).



Hala - Bala Wildlife Sanctuary, Narathiwat



Tourist Information Counter Services, Tourism Authority of Thailand

USEFUL INFORMATION

Immigration

Foreigners seeking entry into the Kingdom of Thailand for tourism, study, business, investment, employment or other purposes must possess valid travel documents recognized by the Royal Thai Government as described in the 1979 Immigration Act and related provisions. Visas may be obtained from all Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates General. However, tourists from some specific countries are exempted from visa requirements and may stay for up to 30 days, providing they have adequate means of support and hold travel tickets confirming their departure within this period.

Moreover, travellers from some countries may apply for a 15 days tourist visa upon arrival at an immigration checkpoint at one of the country's international ports of entry. Visitors with transit or courtesy visas are permitted to stay up to 30 days and up to 60 days with

a tourist visa. Anyone wishing to apply for a visa extension should apply at the Office of the Immigration Bureau, The Government Complex Commemorating His Majesty, Building B, Chang Wattana Road, Lak Si District, Bangkok 10210. For further information, please call 1178, 0 2141 9889 Fax : 0 2143 8228 or www.immigration.go.th



Tourist Information Counter Services, Suvarnabhumi Airport

Tourist Information Services

Tourist information is available at the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in Bangkok, its local offices in 35 major cities and the TAT information counters at Suvarnabhumi Airport, 2nd floor, gate 3 and 10. They provide maps, brochures and useful information on tours, shopping, dining and accommodation. TAT Contact Center, Tel : 1672.

Tourist Police

In 1982, the Tourist Police was set up to coordinate with the Tourism Authority of Thailand in providing safety for tourists. Its responsibilities include receiving and acknowledging claims and complaints, conducting investigations and acting as coordinators of tourist security. At present, some 500 tourist police offices are stationed in major tourist areas.

Bilingual Tourist Police are affiliated with the Tourism Authority of Thailand offices in Bangkok, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Pattaya, Kanchanaburi, Nakhon Ratchasima, Udon Thani, Khon Kaen, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Son, Phitsanulok, Nakhon Sawan, Surat Thani, Phuket and Songkhla to provide assistance for visitors.

In the case of an emergency, contact the Tourist Police Office, 999 Mu 1, Suvarnabhumi 4 Road, Nongprue, Bang Phli, Samut Prakan 10540 Tel : 1155, 0 2134 0521 (Free 24 hours)

Medical Services

All tourism destinations and provincial capitals have hospitals and clinics staffed by well-trained doctors and nurses. In the case of an emergency, an ambulance can be summoned from any private hospital.



TAT Contact Center



Tourist Police



Medical Services



Currency and Exchange Services



Chatuchak Weekend Market, Bangkok



Restaurant, Phuket

Currency and Exchange Services

The Thai unit of currency is the baht. The baht is divided into 100 satang. Coins are valued at 25 satang, 50 satang, 1 baht, 2 baht, 5 baht and 10 baht. Banknotes are valued at 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1,000 baht.

Major currency bills and travellers cheques are cashed easily at hotels, tourist shops, all provincial banks, shopping centres and money changers. Travellers cheques are best changed in banks (you will need your passport). Rates of exchange at banks or authorised money changers are better than those at hotels and department stores. Credit cards are widely accepted.

Business Hours

Most commercial concerns in Bangkok operate five days a week. Government offices are generally open between 8.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. with a 12.00 p.m. to 1 p.m. lunchbreak, Monday through Friday, except on public holidays. Private businesses maintain similar hours 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., with certain exceptions. Most shops are open 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

Tipping

It is customary to tip porters and hotel personnel who have given good personal service. A 10-15% tip is appreciated in restaurants, particularly where service charges are waived. It is not necessary to tip cinema ushers.

Clothing

Light, loose cotton clothing is best. Nylon should be avoided. Sweaters are recommended for the evenings during the cool season or if visiting mountainous areas and remote national parks. Jackets and ties are required in certain restaurants.

Electricity

The electric current is 220 volt AC (50 cycles) throughout the country. There are many types of plugs and sockets in use. Travellers with electric shavers, tape recorders and other appliances should carry a plug-adaptor kit. The larger hotels are likely to have 110 volt transformers available.

Export of Antiquities

Buddha images, Bodhisattva images or fragments, part of ancient monuments and prehistoric objects, are forbidden to be taken out of Thailand. Newly cast Buddha images in complete condition can be exported for worship, cultural exchange or educational purposes with licenses issued by the Fine Arts Department. Not more than 5 pieces per person shall be allowed. Reproductions of antiquities can also be exported with licenses.

Objects together with photographs and applicant's passport with photocopy (in case of export of Buddha images the photocopy of passport must be certified as true copy by the related Embassy or Consulate in Thailand) must be taken to any of the following places: the Office of Archaeology and National Museums in Bangkok (Tel : 0 2628 5033), Chiang Mai National Museum in Chiang Mai or Thalang National Museum in Phuket. A license issuing process lasts for 2 working days.

Exchange Control

Any amount of foreign currency may be brought into the country. Visitors may take foreign currency out of Thailand, but no more than the amount stated in the customs declaration made on arrival. Travellers leaving Thailand may take out no more than 50,000 baht per person in Thai currency.



Thai Handicraft



Suvarnabhumi Airport



Suvarnabhumi Airport Rail Link

International Airports and Airport Tax

Thailand currently has six international airports : Suvarnabhumi Airport, Don Mueang Airport, Chiang Mai Airport, Mae Fah Luang Chiang Rai Airport, Hat Yai Airport and Phuket Airport.

Suvarnabhumi Airport is located 25 kilometres east of downtown Bangkok, provides both international and domestic flights while Don Mueang Airport, 22 kilometres north of Bangkok, provides only domestic flights.

Further Information :

Suvarnabhumi International Airport Tel : 0 2132 1888, 0 2132 1111-2
www.suvarnabhumiairport.com

Don Mueang Airport Tel : 0 2535 1111, 0 2535 1254 (Orient Thai Airlines /Nok Air / Air Asia / Solar Air / Lion Air)
www.airportthai.co.th

Airport tax is included in the airfare.

Visa Immigration Information

According to the Interior Ministerial Office, the following is a list of countries, which have concluded an agreement on the exemption of visa requirement for holders of diplomatic or official passport or service/special passport with Thailand and permitted to stay for 30 and 90 days.

List of countries:

90 Days

Argentina	Austria	Belgium
Bhutan	Brazil	Chile
Costariga	Croatia	Czech Republic
Germany	Hungary	India
Israel	Italy	Japan
Luxembourg	Malaysia	Mexico
Netherlands	Nepal	Phillippines
Panama	Peru	Poland
Republic of Korea	Romania	Russian Federation
Singapore	Slovak Republic	South Africa
Switzerland	Tunisia	Turkey
Ukraine	Uruguay	France

30 Days

Cambodia	China	Mongolia
Laos	Myanmar	New Zealand
Vietnam	Hong Kong	Macau
Oman		

Tourist Visa Exemption

- According to the Interior Ministerial Announcements dated 1 October B.E. 2545 (2002), 20 December B.E. 2545 (2002), 18 October B.E. 2547 (2004) and 6 May B.E. 2548 (2005), do not require a visa when entering Thailand for tourism purposes if their stay in the Kingdom does not exceed 14, 30 and 90 days.

List of countries:

90 Days

Argentina	Brazil	Chile
Republic of Korea		Peru

30 Days

Hong Kong	Laos	Vietnam
Macau	Mongolia	Russia

14 Days

Cambodia

- The applicant must possess instrument of means of living expenses 10,000 Baht per person and 20,000 Baht per family accordingly.

- For more information, please contact the Office of the Immigration Bureau, The Government Complex Commemorating His Majesty, Building B, Chang Wattana Road, Lak Si District, Bangkok 10210. For further information, please call 1178, 0 2141 9889 Fax : 0 2143 8228 or www.immigration.go.th



Thai Elephants Conservation Centre, Lampang

Temporary Tourist Visa

Visa On Arrival

- According to the Interior Ministerial Announcements, passport holder from 28 countries may apply for visas at the immigration checkpoints for the purpose of tourism for the period of not exceeding 15 days.
- The applicant must possess means of living expenses 10,000 Baht per person and 20,000 Baht per family accordingly.
- The applicant must produce full paid ticket which is usable within 15 days since the date of entry.



Wat Phra Kaeo, Bangkok

- Visa on arrival is provided at 24 designated international checkpoints and applicants should produce the application from his/her recent photograph (2 ½ inches) is attached. The application fee is 1,000 Baht.

- Visitor who enter the Kingdom with visa on Arrival generally cannot file an application for extension of stay except in special cases such as illness which prevents them from traveling, etc. They can submit an application at the Office of the Immigration Bureau, The Government Complex Commemorating His Majesty, Building B, Chang Wattana Road, Lak Si District, Bangkok 10210. For further information, please call 1178, 0 2141 9889 Fax : 0 2143 8228 or www.immigration.go.th

List of 28 Countries is as follow:

1. Bhutan : Kingdom of Bhutan
2. China : People's Republic of China
3. Cyprus : Republic of Cyprus
4. Czech : Czech Republic
5. Estonia : Republic of Estonia
6. Hungary : Republic of Hungary
7. India : Republic of India
8. Kazakhstan : Republic of Kazakhstan
9. Latvia : Republic of Latvia
10. Liechtenstein : Principality of Liechtenstein
11. Lithuania : Republic of Lithuania
12. Maldives : Republic of Maldives
13. Mauritius : Republic of Mauritius
14. Oman : Sultanate of Oman
15. Poland : Republic of Poland
16. Russian Federation
17. Saudi Arabia : Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
18. Slovakia : Slovak Republic
19. Slovenia : Republic of Slovenia
20. Uzbekistan

21. Ukraine
22. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
23. Taiwan
24. Bulgaria
25. Andorra
26. Malta
27. Romania
28. San Marino

List of Thailand's Immigration Checkpoints which provides facilities for insurance of visa on arrival area as follow:

1. Suvarnabhumi International Airport
2. Don Muang International Airport, Bangkok
3. Chiang Mai International Airport, Chiang Mai
4. Phuket International Airport, Phuket
5. Hatyai International Airport, Songkhla
6. U Tapao Airport, Rayong
7. Mae Sai Immigration Checkpoint, Chiang Rai
8. Chiang Saen Immigration Checkpoint, Chiang Rai
9. Chiang Khong Immigration Checkpoint, Chiang Rai
10. Betong Immigration Checkpoint, Yala
11. Sadoa Immigration Checkpoint, Songkhla
12. Samui Airport, Surat Thani
13. Sukhothai International Airport, Tak Immigration Checkpoint
14. Bangkok Harbour Immigration Checkpoint, Bangkok
15. Sri Racha Immigration Checkpoint, Chonburi
16. Mabtaput Immigration Checkpoint, Rayong
17. Nong Khai Immigration Checkpoint, Nong Khai

18. Samui Immigration Checkpoint, Surat Thani
19. Phuket Immigration Checkpoint, Phuket
20. Satun Immigration Checkpoint, Satun
21. Krabi Immigration Checkpoint, Krabi
22. Songkhla Harbour Immigraion Checkpoint, Songkhla
23. Chiang Rai Airport Immigration Checkpoint, Chiang Rai
24. Surat Thani Airport Immigration Checkpoint, Surat Thani

Visa Extension

Application for a 30-day extension of stay for any visa is possible at the Office of the Immigration Bureau, The Government Complex Commemorating His Majesty, Building B, Chang Wattana Road, Lak Si District, Bangkok 10210.

For further information, please call 1178, 02141 9889 Fax : 0 2143 8228 or www.immigration.go.th The fee is 1,900 Baht.

Re-Entry Permits

Application fee for a single re-entry permit is 1,000 Baht. A multiple re-entry permit (per visa) is 3,800 Baht.



Khao San Road, Bangkok

TRANSPORTATION

Airport Transfer

Private airport-to-city transfer options include hotel services, airport limousine service (approx 1,000 baht from the airport to downtown), and metered-taxis from public taxi stands located outside gate 4 and 7 on the first floor.

Public transport options include Local Bus and Van.

The Suvarnabhumi Airport Rail Link provide 2 type of services. Express Line Service is a non-stop train, takes 15 minutes. From Suvarnabhumi Airport – Makkasan Station (City Air Terminal-interchange with MRT at Phetchaburi Station) 150 baht, City Line Service is a city train, take 27 minutes. From Suvarnabhumi Airport – Lad Krabang – Ban Thap Chang – Hua Mark – Ramkhamhaeng – Makkasan Station (City Air Terminal – interchange with MRT at Phetchaburi Station), The Fares range from 15-60 baht.

Meanwhile, passengers will be able to check in their luggage at the City Air Terminal for departure. Call : 1690, 0 2308 5600 ext. 2906, 2907 or www.railway.co.th

Getting around Bangkok

Public buses are plentiful and cheap, with 8 baht minimum and 34 baht maximum fares to most destinations within metropolitan. A Bus Route Map is available at bookshops.

Taxis cruising the streets of Bangkok, and designated “taxi-meter” charge 35 baht for the first 3 kilometres and approximately 5 baht for every kilometre thereafter.

Tuk-Tuks or **three wheel taxis** are quite popular among the tourists for short journeys inside Bangkok. Fare must be bargained in advance.

BTS SkyTrains ply along Silom, Sukhumvit and Phahonyothin Roads, connecting many leading hotels, public parks and major shopping areas everyday during 06.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. The fares range from 15-42 baht per trip depending on distance, and 130 baht for 1-day Tourist Pass. BTS Call Center 0 2617 6000 or www.bts.co.th

Bangkok Metro (M.R.T.) operate the route from Hua Lamphong to Bang Sue everyday during 06.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. The fare starts from 16-40 baht depending on distance. Call : 0 2624 5200, 0 2354 2000 or www.bangkokmetro.co.th

River Taxis: There are many types of boats that navigate the Chao Phraya River in Bangkok. Private “Cigarette long-tail boats” are fast and available for tours of the city’s huge canal system. Public river taxis run from dawn till dusk from Wat Ratchasingkhon to as far north as Nonthaburi. The journey takes over an hour. Smaller trips between other landings can cost as little as 9 baht.

Getting around Thailand

Air

There are many airlines operate regular domestic flights from Bangkok to major provincial and resort destinations. Advance booking is necessary when travelling during the high season and public holidays. For more information, please contact directly at those airlines as follow;

-Air Asia (FD) Tel : 0 2515 9999, www.airasia.com

-Bangkok Airways (PG) Tel: 1771, 0 2134 3888, 0 2270 6699 www.bangkokair.com

-Nok Air (DD) Tel : 1318 www.nokair.com

-Nok Mini (5E) Tel : 1318, 0 2900 9955, 0 2535 3928 www.nokmini.com

-Orient Thai Airline (OX) Tel: 1126, 0 2229 4260 www.flyorientthai.com

-Thai Airways International (TG) Tel : 0 2356 1111, 0 2288 7000 www.thaiairways.com

-Solar Air (SRB) Tel : 0 2535 2455-6 www.solarair.co.th

-Happy Air (HPY) Tel : 0 7632 7777-8, 0 2134 8000-3, 0 2216 5151 www.happyair.co.th

-Thai Lion Air (JT) Tel : 0 2142 9988 www.lionair.co.th

-Thai Smile Air (TG) Tel : 0 2356 1111 www.thaismileair.com

Rail

The State Railway of Thailand operates four train lines – Northern, Northeastern, Eastern and Southern – accessing nearly all major provinces.

Train fares depend on class of carriage and destination. Twenty-day rail passes are available for second and third-class carriages.

Hua Lamphong (Bangkok Railway Station) is the main station. Call 1690 (24 hours service), or www.railway.co.th for further information. Tickets can be bought at any railway station.

Buses

Buses and coaches are the only mode of transport to access all provinces in Thailand, running both to and from Bangkok and between each other. Options include ordinary air-conditioned coaches and VIP air-conditioned coaches with refreshment services. Bookings can be made through the following bus terminals :

- Northern Bus Terminal (Mochit), for northern and northeastern destinations and Pattaya, Trat.

- Southern Bus Terminal, for southern and western destinations including Damnoen Saduak Floating Market and Kanchanaburi.

- Eastern Bus Terminal (Ekkamai), for routes to Pattaya, Rayong, Trat and other points east.

For more information, contact Transport Co.,Ltd. (commonly called by Thai as “Bo Kho So”) at Tel : 1490 or www.transport.co.th

Car Hire

Travellers with a valid international driving license may choose to hire a car. English-language road signs and maps are common place. The Bangkok Yellow Pages lists local and international automobile rental companies. Each offers different conditions. Self-drive and chauffeur-driven automobiles are widely available.

International car hire companies such as Avis, Hertz and Budget operate in Bangkok, Pattaya, Hat Yai, Phuket, Chiang Mai and on Ko Samui.





COMMUNICATION

Postal Services

Thailand's mail service is reliable and efficient. Major hotels provide basic postal services on their premises. Provincial post offices are usually open from 8.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m..

Telephones

International phone calls can be made quite easily from mid-to-upper-level hotels or international call booths in tourist areas. There is direct dialling to and from more than 80 countries on five continents. General Post Office (GPO) on Charoenkrung Road, or any major post office also has special booths for making overseas calls. For more information, call CAT Call Center, Tel : 1322

At present, telephone numbers (for local calls and long distance calls within the country) have nine digits and mobile numbers have ten digits. The international dialing code for Thailand is 66. When making international calls from Thailand, first dial 001+ country code + telephone number. For direct assistance, call 1133 (local) or 100 (international).

International Roaming Mobile Phone

A Subscriber Identity Module Card (SIM Card) is now available for Thai and foreign customers who are travelling around for work. The SIM Card must be used in conjunction with a Digital GSM mobile phone within the 900-MHz range or a Digital PCN mobile phone within the 1800-MHz range.

Fax and E-mail

All of Thailand's leading hotels offer facsimile (fax) and e-mail services. Numerous private businesses offer such facilities, most often in conjunction with translation services.

Internet Services

Thailand has been expanding its information service for residents and tourists alike through the Internet system. Services are now available at Thailand's leading hotels and at the many "cybercafe's" that are cropping up in all major tourist destinations.



Khao San Road, Bangkok

DO'S & DON'TS IN THAILAND

Whilst Thais do not expect foreigners to know and understand their culture, visitors can ensure a very pleasant stay by remembering a few simple tips. Dress conservatively in temples and government offices. Short trousers and skirts, and shirts that expose the shoulders are not acceptable in temples in particular. Remove the shoes when entering a temple's hall. As the feet are considered unclean, never point at anyone or anything with them. In contrast, do not touch anyone on the head as this is considered the most sacrosanct part of the body. Do not climb upon Buddha images to take a photograph. Women should never touch monks at all. Try never to show anger or strong feelings in public as Thais consider this improper in an adult. Finally, the monarchy and religion are held in the highest respect in Thailand and any comments or actions considered derogatory to either are not tolerated.



Grand Palace, Bangkok

Special Advice

- Beware of unauthorised people who offer their services as guides. For all tourist information, contact the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Tel : 1672. For information about Bangkok, contact the Bangkok Metropolitan Tourist Bureau, Tel : 0 2225 7612-4.

- Observe all normal precautions as regards to personal safety, as well as the safety of your belongings. Walking alone on quiet streets or deserted areas is not recommended. Be sure that all your valuables-money, jewellery, and airline tickets are properly protected from loss. Visitors needing assistance relating to safety, unethical practices, or other matters, please call the the Tourist Police at Tel : 1155.

- Drop your garbage into a waste container. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is now strictly enforcing the law in an effort to keep the city clean and healthy. The fine will be imposed on a person who spits, discards cigarette stubs, or drops rubbish in public areas.

- Sex with children is a crime. Whoever has sexual intercourse or commits an indecent act on a child (any person under the age of 18 years), whether such child shall consent or not, shall be punished with imprisonment or with a fine or both.

- Do not get yourself involved with drugs. Penalties for drug offences are very severe in Thailand.

- Do not support any manner of wild animal abuse. Never purchase any products or souvenirs made from wild animals including reptiles like snakes, monitor lizards, and also turtle shell and ivory. Avoid patronizing local restaurants that serve wild animal delicacies. It is against the law to slaughter wildlife for food in Thailand.



Central World Shopping Center, Bangkok

SHOPPING ADVICE

What to Buy

Thai silk, cotton, nielloware, silverware, bronzeware, pottery and celadon, pewter, precious stones, finished jewellery and a dazzling range of folk handicrafts make memorable gifts and souvenirs. International standard ready-made sportswear and leisurewear is inexpensive and quality tailors and dressmakers offer reliable 24-hour service in Bangkok and major tourist destination.

Shopping Tips

Department stores and a number of shops in Bangkok have fixed prices, but at most of others bargaining is acceptable and expected; some department stores will even offer a discount on expensive items like jewellery and fine furniture. No fixed rules can be given on the process depending as it does on the bargainer's

skill and the shopkeeper's mood, but the final price may be reduced as much as 30% to that first quoted. An important point to keep in mind is that Thais admire good manners and a sense of humour and tend to be put off by a loss of temper. Providing you have the time, a good general rule is to make a survey of several shops selling the sort of items you want before coming to a final decision.

The Jewel Fest Club

Jewellery and gemstones from Thailand are also a favourite item for many visitors to the kingdom. Their beauty, quality craftsmanship and reasonable price have earned Thai precious and semi-precious stones a worldwide reputation. Yet occasionally, there have been visitors who complained about the action of few unethical jewellers who persuaded them to purchase jewellery at an unreasonable price.

Through the cooperation of the Thai Gem and Jewellery Traders Association (TGJTA) and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), THE JEWEL FEST CLUB has been established on October 29, 1997, bringing about 90 leading jewellery manufacturers and wholesalers. The club's aim is to offer quality products at reasonable prices with a money-back guarantee if buyers are not completely satisfied with their purchases. Retail outlets bear the emblem featured here for ready identification.



When you purchase an item of jewellery from a store that is clearly identified as a member of THE JEWEL FEST CLUB, your purchase will be duly recorded, and a certificate detailing your purchase will be issued. Not only does this certificate of authenticity clearly state the nature and price of your purchase, it also guarantees your refund should you wish to return the purchase, cut by 10% if you return the merchandise to the point of sale within 30 days, and by 20% after 30 days but within 45 days of purchase. Contact THE JEWEL FEST CLUB at Tel: 0 2630 1390-7, Fax: 0 2630 3257, email : tgjta@thaigemjewelry.or.th, www.jewelfest.com.

Packing and Shipping Services

Thanks to the ever-increasing number of tourists coming to Thailand, most shops are experienced at shipping abroad and will attend to all the documents such as insurance, customs and necessary permits. The Central Post Office also offers a parcel-wrapping service for those who want to make small shipments themselves. For larger items or

bulk shipments, there are several Bangkok companies who specialise in such matters.

VAT Refund

Visitors entering the Kingdom on tourist visas are entitled to refunds of the 7% value-added tax (VAT) paid on goods purchased at shops and department stores displaying "VAT Refund for Tourists" signs. The refund may be claimed if the claimed amounts in all P.P.10's have been totaled 5,000 baht or over. Tourist is eligible to receive P.P.10 form when the total purchase of 2,000 baht or over is made from the same store on the same date. Before checking in at the international airport (Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Hat Yai, Phuket, Utapao), tourist must show your purchases, completed P.P.10 form and tax invoices to the Customs Officer for inspection. Certain luxury goods must be shown to an excise official. Refunds may be in bank draft form or credited to a credit card. For more information, please contact the VAT Refund for Tourists Office, Tel : 0 2272 8195-8 or VAT Refund Office at Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Tel : 0 2134 0674-8 or www.rd.go.th/vrt or E-mail : vrefund@rd.go.th



MBK Shopping Center, Bangkok

USEFUL THAI WORDS

English	Thai
Good morning,	Sa-wat-di
Good afternoon	
Good evening, Good night,	
Hello, Good-bye	
Mr./Miss/Mrs./	Khun
Yes	Chai
No	Mai
How are you?	Khun-sa-bai-di-rue
Very well. Thank you	Sa-bai-di. Khop-khun
Thank you	Khop-khun
I am going to ...	Chan-cha-pai
How much is this?	Ra-kha-thao-rai
Too expensive	Phaeng-pai
Any discount?	Lot-ra-kha-dai-mai
Please wrap it for me.	Ho-hai-duai
Too much	Mak-pai
Understand?	Khao-chai-mai
I don't understand	Chan-mai-khao-chai
Please speak slowly	Prot-phut-cha-cha
No, I won't go	Chan-mai-pai
Please drive slowly	Prot-khap-cha-cha
Be careful	Ra-wang
Turn to the right	Liao-khwa
Turn to the left	Liao-sai
Drive straight on	Khap-trong-pai
Slow down	Cha-cha
Stop	Yut
I'm sorry	Chan-sia-chai
Excuse me, Pardon me	Kho-thot
Very good	Di-mak
Not good	Mai-di
Good Luck	Chok-di

NUMBERS

1	Nueng
2	Song
3	Sam
4	Si
5	Ha
6	Hok
7	Chet
8	Paet
9	Kao
10	Sip
11	Sip-et
12	Sip-song
13	Sip-sam
20	Yi-sip
21	Yi-sip-et
25	Yi-sip-ha
30	Sam-sip
40	Si-sip
50	Ha-sip
60	Hok-sip
100	Nueng-roi
150	Nueng-roi-ha-sip
200	Song-roi
500	Ha-roi
1,000	Nueng-phan
10,000	Nueng-muen
100,000	Nueng-saen
1,000,000	Nueng-lan

