

Thailand Travel Guide



Thailand offers its visitors a chance to experience its vibrant culture

Thailand is an exotic destination where you get stunning locales, rich cultural heritage. There are many places to explore like Bangkok, Phuket, Koh Samui, Pattaya, Khao Lak, Krabi, and Phi Phi Island. What is more impressive of Thailand that here on one hand you get a bustling metropolis with all the trendy malls, skyscrapers, and on the other hand you have the serene locale at Trang or for that matter Krabi.

Some of the must visiting places in Thailand are: Ayutthaya Historical Park – which is declared by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, Chiang Mai – where you will find more than 300 temples, and Koh Samui – which is a scenic island full of verdant greenery and coconut plantations or the exotic beaches in Phuket.

The country was formerly known as Siam, which is a hub of commercial activities. Thailand is a paradise for tourists and here you have the landscape full of sun drenched beaches, island fringed with swaying palms, and quaint hilly villages.

The entry visa in Thailand is for a maximum of 30 days.

The various places which you must include in your tour itinerary are:

Ko Chang - a serene island developed as a tourist destination

Ko Lanta - quiet island near Krabi

Ko Pha Ngan where you would find Full Moon Party

Ko Samet beach island

Ko Samui

Ko Tao - scuba diving destination

Phuket - Thai paradise island

Rai Leh exotic beach

Ko Chang National Park - in Trat Province

Tarutao National Park - in Satun Province

Similan Islands - in Phang Nga province

Getting In

Due to its immense popularity as one of the premier tourist destinations of the world, Thailand has carved a distinct niche for itself in the hearts of millions of leisure travelers who assemble here from all across the globe. As a direct consequence of the booming tourism industry in Thailand, there are numerous options for reaching Thailand and by availing these various choices, millions of tourists visit this country every year. The most popular option for reaching Thailand is undoubtedly the airways, as a host of international airlines operates regular flights at the international airports of Thailand. Apart from its innumerable domestic airports in Thailand, the world class international airports in Thailand primarily include the Bangkok International Airport, Chiang Mai International Airport, Hat Yai International Airport, Phuket International Airport, Chiang Rai International Airport, and Suvarnabhumi Airport. All the international

airports in Thailand are well connected to the cities by buses, taxis, and shuttle cars. Some of the airports in Thailand even have more than one terminal for domestic and international airlines. Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand and it is also the largest hub in the entire continent of Asia and thus all the international airlines which have flights to Bangkok and major cities of Thailand like Chiang Mai, Hat Yai, Ko Samui, Phuket, and Pattaya also have direct international flights to and a host of premier cities of the world. The travelers can thereby avail any of the flights for reaching Thailand at a reasonable cost. Thai Airways International, Bangkok Airways, Orient Thai Airline, Singapore International Airlines, British Airways, Emirates, Cathay Pacific, Lufthansa, KLM, Royal Brunei, Qantas Airways, and Air India are premier international airlines which serve the various international airports of Thailand. Thai Airways International along with being the national flag carrier of Thailand is also one of the founding members of the Star Alliance network. Thai Airways International primarily operates from the Suvarnabhumi Airport and just like Singapore Airlines provides longest non-stop commercial flights from Bangkok to New York and Los Angeles; it also won the 'Worlds Best Cabin Staff' by Skytrax in June 2006. Apart from the national airline of Thailand and premier international airlines of the world, many low-cost carriers also serve Thailand and make it convenient for the budget travelers to opt for flights forgetting to Thailand. Another popular option of reaching Thailand is by traveling through road and Thailand shares border with Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Myanmar and the travelers can reach Thailand by crossing these borders in long distance buses and cars. Another option for getting to Thailand is by traveling in trains and Thailand's only international train service has routes which connects Butterworth and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia and then stretches till Singapore. Traveling in trains is a good option as tickets are really affordable and if someone is interested in opting for luxury travel, then they can avail the luxurious Eastern and Oriental Express, which operates once a week and is provided with exclusive facilities like gourmet dining, personal butler service, etc. Another exciting choice of traveling to Thailand is to opt for ferry services and ferry services operates between Satun province in southern Thailand to the Malaysian island of Langkawi and there are also occasional cruises from Malaysia and Singapore to Phuket and Bangkok.

Transport

The travelers enjoy a hassle free trip in Thailand. Thailand is well linked by air, rail, and road transport and all the premier sightseeing destinations are well connected with each other. The travelers do not require to waste a lot of time in getting around from one place to another. The most popular vehicle for getting around within most cities predominantly comprises of the three wheeled 'tuk tuks' and the 'songthaews'.

One of the most frequently-opted modes of travel in Thailand is airways and Thai Airways International, which is also the national airline of Thailand operates service to all the eminent towns and islands. It provides flights to 22 domestic airports of Thailand. Bangkok Airways, another premier airline in Thailand also provides regular flights in seven additional routes, while PB Air and Phuket Air also operate domestic flights for the convenience of the visitors who choose to spend a grand vacation in Thailand every year from all across the world. Special discounts are also available during off seasons and during special promotional periods by some of these airlines and if the tourists avail domestic flights in Thailand during this period, then they would save a considerable amount of money.

Thailand has a vast network of rail and metro systems. The State Railway of Thailand operates 4,070 km of 1,000-m gauge railway line, but the capital city of Thailand, Bangkok can take the advantage of the metro system, which consists of Bangkok Skytrain and the Bangkok Metro subway. Bangkok, Surat Thani, Phetchaburi, and Ratchaburi are the cities of Thailand that are linked with railways. There are primarily four main trunk routes to the northern, eastern, southern, and northeastern regions of Thailand and these four main routes are also accompanied by another line which serves Thon Buri, River Kwai Bridge, and Nam Tok. For the convenience of the tourists, there are innumerable daily services available on each route and the travelers can choose from air-conditioned, sleeping, and restaurant cars on the principal trains according to their preference and convenience.

Another exciting choice of traveling in Thailand is by waterways, as Thailand has 1,600 km of navigable inland waterway. Services for using the waterways are available between Thanon Tok and Nonthaburi, and luxury cruises are also available on the Oriental Queen. Long-tailed motorboats and taxi-boat ferries also operate on these routes of Thailand.

There are interurban routes to all provinces of Thailand and privately owned, air-conditioned buses operate on these routes and their charges are highly reasonable. Though conventional bus services in Bangkok are operated by the Government Mass Transit Authority, but there are also widespread private minibus operations and passenger-carrying trucks. Other than buses, there are abundant taxi services, which provide service all throughout the day and there are primarily three categories of taxis: taxi-meter; taxis which are unmetered; and 3-wheeled, open-air tuk-tuks. If someone is not interested in hiring taxis, then he or she can easily opt for car rental facilities in all the main cities of Thailand. So don't dare to waste anymore time and simply plan your next trip to Thailand and spend a rocking time exploring the numerous tourist attractions of Thailand and you will be offered numerous choices for getting around comfortably in Thailand.

Tips

Be aware of the established social practices and norms in Thailand to prevent yourself from getting into unnecessary problems. It is really beneficial for the travelers to get a basic idea about a country before actually paying a visit there. The present practices of Thai society are deeply influenced by centuries of cultural interchange with China and India, but recently one observes stronger influences from the west and this is particularly true for the younger generation of Thai people. In modern day Thailand, a western visitor is greeted with cordially shaking hands, however the traditional way to greet people is by wai, closing hands and slightly bowing the head and the Buddhist monks are always greeted in this manner. While traveling in Thailand the travelers should keep it in mind that the Thai Royal Family is regarded with an almost religious reverence and the visitors are supposed to respect this. The Thai people consider it extremely bad manners to make public displays of anger and public displays of affection between men and women are also not accepted with too much of appreciation and are often scowled at. It is considered to be extremely rude to touch anyone on the head or to point one's feet at someone. If you are invited to someone's house in Thailand, then don't forget to remove your shoes before entering the house and the same should also be applied before entering temples. Men seldom need to be attired in formal suits as informal wear are widely acceptable in all over Thailand and in any sort of official function men are usually expected to wear traditional Thai shirt. Beachwear should be restricted to the beaches only and topless sunbathing is not acceptable in Thailand. There is no restriction regarding smoking and it is widely acceptable in Thailand.

Foreign currencies can be exchanged at banks, hotels, in major cities and towns and bureaux de change. The banks offer the best exchange rates in Thailand and the hotels usually charge high commissions. The visitors can relax as all the major credit cards like American Express, MasterCard, and Visa are accepted in hotels and tourist resorts in Thailand, but it is always better to check it out with the credit card Company to obtain the details of merchant acceptability and other services. To avoid any sort of additional exchange rate charges, the travelers are advised to carry traveler's cheques in US Dollars, Euros, or Pounds Sterling while they tour in Thailand. The import of local and foreign currency is unrestricted and both Thai and foreign travelers are allowed to take a maximum amount of THB50,000 per person without any prior authorization and while visiting any neighboring country the amount becomes

THB500, 000 per person. Thai silks and cottons, batiks, silver, pottery with celadon green glaze, precious and semiprecious stones, dolls, masks, lacquerware, pewterware, bamboo artifacts and bronzeware, are some of the most-shopped items in Thailand..

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