THAILAND

Thailand is a Southeast Asian country bordered to the north by Laos and Burma, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, to the south by the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia, and to the west by the Andaman Sea. Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, is the country’s largest city and the center of political, commercial, industrial, and cultural activities.

# Transportation

Most visitors to Thailand enter through Bangkok’s Don Muang International Airport, which is served by the world’s major airlines. International flights also arrive from Malaysia and Singapore at Hat Yai and Phuket in southern Thailand, and from Hong Kong at Chiang Mai in northern Thailand.

# Traveling in Thailand

Thai Airways, Thailand’s domestic airline, offers tourism destinations such as Phuket and Chiang Mai with feeder routes to thriving commercial centers and provincial capitals with airfields. An efficient rail system links northern and northeastern towns with the capital and a southern route enables visitors to travel by rail into Malaysia and Singapore. Domestic express trains provide first-, second-, and third-class cars while slower trains may have only third-class seats. A modern highway system reaches into all corners of the country. If you possess a valid international driving license, you can rent an automobile. Thai automobile rental rates compare favorably with those found in other Asian countries.

# Attractions

Thailand is a beautiful country with majestic mountains, national marine parks, sparkling beach resorts, ruined cities, archaeological wonders, and year-round festivals and events. Bangkok and the surrounding area boast Thailand’s major attractions. While touring the capital city, visit the Emerald Buddha Temple and the Grand Palace complex. The Temple of the Dawn, the Temple of the Reclining Buddha, the Golden Mount, and the Marble Temple are popular attractions that were featured during Bangkok’s Bicentennial Celebration in 1982. Take a trip to the Susan Pakkad Palace lacquer pavilion, which is decorated with seventeenth century gold leaf murals, or visit the Jim Thompson house, which contains a superb collection of Asian art and artifacts. One hour west of Bangkok is the Rose Garden, a riverside tropical park and country club that offers an 18-hole championship golf course. Just one-half hour from Bangkok is the Phra Pathom Chedi, the world’s tallest Buddhist monument, which marks the spot where Buddhism was introduced to the region over 2,300 years ago.

# Entertainment

Thailand offers a variety of entertainment options for visitors, such as boxing stadiums, race and golf courses, tennis and squash courts, billiard halls, nightclubs, gourmet restaurants, concert halls, teahouses, cocktail lounges, amusement parks, museums, theaters, art galleries, and cinemas. Thailand’s English-language newspapers carry daily listings of current attractions.

# Accommodations

Thailand offers accommodations ranging from opulent hotels to simple beachside dwellings on remote islands. Major tourism destinations such as Bangkok, Pattaya, Chiang Mai, and Phuket boast modern first-class hotels with every conceivable convenience and international standard convention facilities. Family-style hotels, bungalow complexes, guest houses, houseboats, hotels, motels, and beachside huts are available, costing from a few dollars a day to hundreds of dollars a night.

# Shopping

Bargains are found in bazaars, air-conditioned shopping centers, boutiques, department stores, and government-approved emporiums. Shop for Thai silks, cottons, pewter stoneware, precious stones and gems, and quality-crafted jewelry. Shoppers can take advantage of a monthly shopping guide containing useful shopping tips, maps of major shopping areas, and a comprehensive list of shops and stores.

# Points of Interest

Grand Palace—Na Phra Lan Road
National Museum Bangkok—Na Phra That Road
Phra Racha Dem Palace—Arun Amarin Road
Jim Thompson Thai House Museum—Rama I Road

# Passports/Visas

All visitors entering Thailand must possess a valid passport. A 60-day tourist visa is obtainable from all Thai embassies and consulates. Consider the following regulations when considering your length of stay in Thailand:

 Without visa (with confirmed ticket) 15 days

 Tourist passenger with transit visa 30 days

 Tourist visa 60 days

 Non-Immigrant visa 90 days

Resources:

Tourism Authority of Thailand

National Statistical Office

Thailand Discovery