



Visitors to Thailand's capital city cannot help being overwhelmed by it all. The city is daunting, a steamy, modern sprawl that seems to carry on endless. Bangkok where 'bang' means riverside village; and 'kok' a wild olive, be-

came Thailand's capital when Rama I moved the city across the Chao Phraya River from Thon Buri in 1872 to ensure fortification against the Burmese who had sacked the capital of Ayutthaya. Magnificent palaces, temples and canals were built. The area, known as Rattanakosin island, or the old royal city, exists today, housing the Grand Palace, the National Museum, and some of the city's most celebrated Wats (temples). From Rattanakosin the city spread. Chinese merchants, under royal orders, moved eastward to form a new settlement—today's vibrant Chinatown. King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), inspired by his European travels, built wide, tree-lined boulevards and erected neoclassic buildings that still much in evidence in Dusit, north of Rattanakosin. Unbridled development began in the late 1950s and has continued since. Khlongs (canals), which had earned the city the appellation of the Venice of the East by early European visitors, were mostly filled in and roads built. Later came the mad rush of office towers, hotels and condominiums with little, if any, thought to city planning. Today, Bangkok hammers the sense of visitors with its controlled chaos. But scratch the surface of this metropolis with population about 8 million, you'll find pockets of surprising beauty and grace. A surfeit of grand, riotously ornate Thai architecture links the city to its past, while gleaming modern skyscrapers point to its future. Just off the frenetic, traffic-clogged streets are quiet, snaking sois (side streets) with rows of wooden houses and a community feel. A trip on the city's Skytrain unfolds rooftop views of parks, lush tropical gardens, and huge colonial mansions that have escaped development. The Chao Phraya river, reveals a tranquil side of the city; exploring it and the maze of khlongs either by public water transport or charter is a must of a visit. Indeed, this is a city where the truly shocking, horrendous, and horrible exist alongside a moment of pure beauty. Sukhumvit Road, a main thoroughfare in the eastern part of the city, is a perfect exam-



ple. The boulevard appears to be a creation of the devil, with absurdly packed sidewalks, broken chunks of concrete, the sky blackened by concrete pillars and track of the Skytrain, vendors crammed into every square inch, and a total sense of mayhem. Yet, walk slowly and you see the magnificence of carved fruit among vendors selling copy watches, the smiling girl selling exquisite floral baskets, a Buddhist shrine in the midst of a busy intersection, and perhaps an old Chinese fortune-teller predicting peoples' fortune in the middle of this madness. At night the city explodes with the liveliest entertainment in Asia. Superb Thai restaurants are found in traditional houses. International cuisines rank with the world's best. Sophisticated nightclubs, along with raunchy bars and entertainment venues, are scattered through the city. About the only thing Bangkok doesn't offer visitors is boredom. World-class traffic jams are a constant frustration. Fortunately, taxi fares are cheap.



Trips in town will most time cost less than \$5 even in heavy traffic. Many locals, and the adventurous tourist, opt for the city's army of motorcycle taxis that weave expertly through traffic. It is a quick and hair-raising way to get around. Tuk-tuks, colorful three-wheeled taxis—named because

of the noise they made by their small engines, are fun for short journeys but are often more expensive (and dangerous) than taxis. The modern Skytrain is the most efficient and agreeable way to get around.

Thailand has the distinction among Southeast Asian countries of never been colonized by a western power. Neither has it suffered from civil wars nor the racial or religion conflicts that have, at one time or another, plagued other countries in the region. This remarkable feat in an often volatile part of the world is celebrated in its name: Thailand, or Prathet Thai. Translated it means 'Land of the Free.' Bangkok, as Thailand's capital city, beneath its modern veneer lies an unmistakable 'Thainess'. It is also the most unique city in S.E. Asia where the well preserved old meets the new; you'll see monks in saffron robes ride the city's modern Skytrain; Tuk-tuks speed down busy Sukhumvit Road among the BMWs. People still greet each other with a traditional wai (hands joined in a prayer-like position in front of the chest and head bowed slightly). Thailand's past, represented in its art, architecture, and religion, is in itself reason enough to visit the country. Bangkok, with its superb dining and entertainment, and the traditional friendliness and hospitality of the Thai people, you'll end up with an exceptional enjoyable visit.



# 7-Day Alluring Bangkok Tour

Sightseeing - Massage & Spa - Culinary Exploration

## Tour Itinerary:

### Day 01:

Depart U.S. for Bangkok.

### Day 02:

Arrive Bangkok, meet by our representative, transfer to hotel.

### Day 03:

Morning Bangkok city tour visiting the Wat Traimit (Golden Buddha Temple), Grand Palace & Emerald Buddha Temple; then take a boat ride along the Chao Phraya River to observe lifestyle of the riverbank population. Enjoy an international buffet lunch at a hotel by the river. In the evening, enjoy a Thai/Chinese crossover cuisine seafood dinner before going to the Siam Niramit for a traditional Thai Theatrical Show, a world-class performance of Thai art and cultural heritage. (B/L/D).

### Day 04:

In the mid-afternoon, we will take you to the Healthland Spa where you'll enjoy a session of authentic Thai massage and foot reflexology. Then proceed to the River City Pier for a Thai buffet dinner cruise. After dinner, visit the Suan Lum Night Bazaar, the first official night bazaar in Bangkok. (B/D).

### Day 05:

In mid-morning, visit the famed Bussaracum Restaurant where you'll be given a 3-dish Thai cooking class. You'll enjoy your own creation as lunch (under the circumstance that you're not successful, we'll provide you with something edible). A certificate will be given to you after completion. (B/L).

### Day 06 - 07:

Days at leisure for you to explore Bangkok at your own pace. (B).

### Day 08:

Transfer to airport for departure. (B).

Departure period	Standard	Superior
April 01 - May 03 August 24 - September 30 October 01 - 25 March 12 - 31, 2020	\$1,575	\$1,815
May 04 - June 04 August 17 - 23 December 04 - 13	\$1,625	\$1,865
June 05 - August 16 December 14 - 25	\$1,675	\$1,915
October 26 - December 03 December 26 - 31	\$1,525	\$1,765
January 01 - March 11, 2010	\$1,475	\$1,715
Single room supplement	\$265	\$575

Prices based on a minimum of two people traveling together, double occupancy. Prices do not include taxes and fuel surcharge and subject to change without notice.

## Hotel Accommodations:

Standard: Asia Hotel or Bangkok Palace.

Superior: La Bua at State Tower or Pathumwan Princess Hotel.

