

Thailand

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Travel time: 04/07, 06/98

General Information

Thailand is getting very touristy. Only the eastern part is less crowded.

Take a bus with fan if you have the choice. You will have the possibility to open the windows. AC busses will freeze you to ice if it's working. If the AC is not working, it will become a night mare because no window can be opened to release the heat.

For diver:

www.padiidiveguides.com

Bangkok (04/07)

Accommodation:

Rambuttri Village Inn
95 Soi Rambuttri
Chakka Phong Road
Tel.: 02-282 9162

www.khaosan-hotels.com

The Rambuttri looks much more like a hotel and offers very clean [rooms](#) and a small [pool](#) at the rooftop. The location is calm but not too remote. That's why it's sometimes fully booked. It's 580 B for a large single with own bath, TV, AC. [Price list](#). The laundry next to it charges 25 B per kilo. Internet from 7 AM to 11 PM, restaurants and a travel office of Mr. Thai is also around the corner. [Map](#)

Highly recommendable.

Hotel Welcome Sawasdee Inn
5-7 Soi Rongmai
Pranakorn
Tel.: 02 629 – 2321

www.sawasdee-hotels.com

The hotel has small AC [rooms](#) with own toilet and warm shower for 350 B for a single and 280 B with shared bath and fan. For this price acceptable and it's calm here because it's off the main locations. [Map](#)

Recommendable.

Food:

Scoozi Pizzeria Italiana
201 Soi Sunset Street
Khao San Rd.
Phanakorn
Delivery Tel.: 0-2280-5280
Reservation Tel: 0-2280-5281

www.scoozihouse.com

Nice original Italian pizza. [Map](#)

Highly recommendable.

[Up](#)

Sight Seeing:

Grand Palace and Temple of The Emerald Buddha

Open daily from 8.30 AM to 3.30 PM. Last entrance 3.00 PM. Entrance fee for the Royal Regalia: 10 B. Dress [properly](#) with long clothes. Shorts are [forbidden](#). Audio guide in several [languages](#) for 200 B for 2 hours.

Recommendable.

Siriraj Medical Museum

Open 9.00 AM to 4.00 PM Monday to Saturday. Admission fee 40 B. Find the preserved boddies of murders displayed here. Nothing for the faint-hearted. [Map](#)

Creepy.

Chatuchak Marke

If you like shopping the Chatuchak Market opened only at weekend is a must. From Banglamphu take bus no. 15 for 7 B to Siam and change to the sky train to [Mo Chit](#) (N8) for 35 B. You can easily spend a day buy strolling through the alleys of the many shops, which are combined to different zones like garments, pets, furniture's and so on.

Very recommendable.

Daytrip to Ayutaya

For 500 to 550 B (Summer Palace 100 B extra) the tour starts around 7 AM by picking up all customers at their hotels. At around 9 AM the Summer Palace is reached in a minivan. Than stopped at four to five different sights for 20 to 60 minutes and returned around 5 PM. A great day out, well organized, good guide with the possibility to change the program, good traditional [lunch](#) (1h). Booked at Mr. Thai next to Rambuttri Village Inn. [Map](#)

Highly recommendable.

View Tower

The view over Bangkok is best from the revolving platform of [Hotel](#) Baiyoke Tower 2. Come here for the sunset and see the million lights of the city after dark. It's 200 B including drink at the 83 floor bar. Additional beer and cocktails are 200 to 240 B. Next to the tower is a small night market selling mostly garments for reasonable prices. Starts around 6 PM.

Very recommendable.

Electronics and CDs

The Pantip [Placa](#) is good for cheap electronic items and pirated software and films of any style. CD is 120, DVD 200 B. It is open from 9 AM to 8 PM and can be reached from Banglamphu with bus no. 2, 60 and 512.

Amazing Metal Sculptures

30 Patpong Road

Suriyawong, Bangrak

Nice shop where you can find aliens and others from Hollywood welded together from metall.

Shooting Office

62 Thaniya Building

2nd Floor, Room 202

Silom

www.bangkokshooting.com

Rifle 20 bullets 3500 B, gun 50 bullets 3000 B, machine gun 30 bullets 3000 B, clay pigeon shooting 25 bullets 3000 B. [Map](#)

[Up](#)

Useful:

To sell alcoholic drink at the stores are prohibited between 2 and 5 PM and between midnight and 11 AM.

Travel agency Mr. Thai

A16 Rambuttri Village Inn

Banglamphu

Very helpful travel agency.

Post Zone TNT

180 Tani Road

Taladyod

Pranakorn

Tel.: 0-2629-1461

Postzone_bkk@hotmail.com

It's next to the Khao San Road opened every day from 9 AM to 9 PM. Packing is possible for reasonable prices. Choice of different shipping: air (6 days), economic (1 month) and sea (2 - 6 month). For 16kg parcel to Switzerland with economic 3600 B.

Travel:

Beware: At the time of travel not all domestic flights operating from the old (domestic) and not all international flight from the new Suvarnabhumi airport.

Bus Suvarnabhumi Airport - City

It's 150 B for one of the four buslines to the city. The line no. 2 runs to Khao Tao Road which is next to the touristy area of Banglamphu. [Map](#)

Private bus transfer from Banglamphu to Suvarnabhumi Airport for 120 B

Myfriend's Travel Agency

74/1 Soi Rambuttri Chakrapongs Road

Pranakorn

Tel.: 02 – 6290297

Operating [hours](#): 4 AM to 10 PM every hour. It's around the corner of Rambuttri Village Inn.

To Siem Reap

The tourist trip to Cambodia is a pleasant ride only up to the border. Stopped for a lunch break after 3.5 hours on paved road where someone took care of the correct filling of the visa forms. For 1300 B the visa procedure will be done for you. After crossing the border to Cambodia with the help of another assistant you have to wait for 2 to 3 hours in the heat for the arrival of other customers (It's just to be not too early in Siem Reap that you choose the lodge where this horror trip ends). After hours of waiting you will be squeezed into a short seated non AC bus where you better leave the windows closed because of all the dirt and dust. The 190 km of the [road](#) turns out to be a peace of rocks in the earth. After half of the 5 hours ride the bus stops for a dinner break for half an hour at a reasonable restaurant.

Before you reach Siem Reap the travel guide starts telling you the excellence of his lodge and how expensive, unsafe and fully booked all the other places are. The trip ends at 10 PM at a remote lodge somewhere at the noisy main road far from the city center. Cheating horror trip. Never again.

Absolutely not recommendable.

Locals are taking the direct bus from Bangkok to Siem Reap for 13 USD leaving from both cities at 7:30 AM. In this case organize the visa before.

[Up](#)

Chiang Mai (06/98)

Accommodation:

You can find accommodation for 100 B (PK-Guesthouse, single with van and shower/toilet).

Useful:

Around the university is a nice night market where mostly young people are selling clothes and other stuff. There are also a lot of good local kitchen.

[Up](#)

Ko Chang (06/98)

Nice beaches, natural jungle, good food and less crowded especially in the offseason.

Accommodation:

At White Sand you can get a bamboo bungalow with balcony directly at the sea for 100 B. To White Sand leave the pickup from the harbour at Rock Sand. It's a 20 minute walk along the beach to the right (north). It's nice here but keep an eye on your valuables especial at night or use the safe at the reception. A few meters away are some illegal built bungalows for 60 B.

Useful:

You can rent a rundown MTB for 80 B a day. If you like biking you should drive to both ends of the street. Especially the east road is very impressive but a hard ride because it's 30 km dirt road (one-way). Carry a strong stick with you to beat back dog-attacks and be prepared for a great dirt.

Take a guide with you if you want to cross the island by jungle walk. It's very difficult to find the right path but its a very impressive hike.

[Up](#)

Ko Phi Phi (04/07) Large [map](#)

Accommodation:

RS Guest House
Tel.: 075-601223

The guesthouse has only [doubles](#) with own [shower](#) and fan for 700 B. Self operated lockers are at the entrance available. Mosquito protection only at the windows. Fresh towels and blankets but used covers. Ask for new once. Deposit for the room key: 200 B. There are cheaper and better hostels available even when the tourist information at the peer gives other information.
Acceptable.

Bamboo Huts

At the south end of the beach at the peer side are some nicely made bamboo [huts](#) with fan and mosquito net. The smaller for 600 B with bargain and 800 B for larger. All with shared shower and toilet. Restaurant and drinks for take away are available. It's next to the nice calm climbing [area](#) and 5 minutes walk to the main area.

Useful:

Phi Phi Scuba diving center
Tel.: 075-612665

www.ppscuba.com

Phi Phi Scuba offer different dive trips including all PADI dive courses. They run a shop with competent staff and have a nice chill out [area](#) at the first floor. A nice day trip is to the wrack of the King Cruiser, Sharks Point and Anemone Reef for 3800 B including good [equipment](#), instructor and two meals + coffee, tea and water on a large dive [boat](#) with a [maximum](#) of four [divers](#) per group starting 7:30 AM and return 5 PM. The drift dive at the wrack is very special, Shark Point and Anemone Reef with flocks of fish and corals.

Half day trip to closer dive sites like Maya and Palong Wall are available too and perfect if you have to catch the afternoon ferry to Phuket. With the same condition like the full day trip it's 2300 B only. Starts at 7:30 AM and return at 1 PM. Nice drift dives with big turtles but less corals and fishes.

The visibility is not that good as at Ko Tao.

Highly recommendable.

The tourist information at the peer might offer you the really cheapest stay for 700 B but there are definitely some for 500 and dorms for 350 B. As with any given information check them by your own.

The sunset point offer a nice view around the island and is [packed](#) with foreigners at sunset. Close by is a souvenir shop which has ice cream and cold soft drinks too.

Travel:

To Phuket

The last ferry to Phuket leaves Ko Phi Phi at 2:30 PM for 350 B. The port of Phuket is far off the city center but at the ferry cheap tickets are offered to Phuket city center (50 B) or other touristy places like the airport and Patong. Go for it. You can't get better offers.

[Up](#)

Ko Samui (04/07)

Accommodation:

New Lapaz Villa
Maenam Beach
Koh Samui
Tel.:06677 – 425296

www.newlapaz.com

The New Lapaz Villa and Resort offer [single](#) with fan and [bathroom](#) with only cold water for 400 B in one of the [huts](#). They have a small [pool](#), self operated lockers, internet, a restaurant and a beautiful [beach](#) just a step away. It's a little remote because the main road is 500 meters away. Therefore it's very calm and romantic. The huts are well used but fairly clean with fresh towels and blankets.

On the main road to the right are some mini markets, red light bars, a Danish owned restaurant and a Thai restaurant. To the left is a noodle soup stall (30 B), a mini market, three ATMs which did no work with my credit cards and a money changer. [Map](#)

Highly recommendable for non-party-people and families.

Useful:

Try to grab a free copy of the very informative "Essential Samui" booklet with loads of adverts but also useful tourist information.

www.essential-samui.com

Travel:

In the arrival [hall](#) at the airport are booking offices for the ferries to Ko Pangan and Ko Tao, for lots of hotels and the limousine service. Their cheapest offer to stay was the New Lapaz Villa. From the airport to any hotel on the island the limousine service (mini bus) is 150 B with baggage liability limitation.

To Ko Tao

The speed boat depart to Ko Tao at 8, 12:30 AM and 1:30 PM, return from Ko Tao at 9:30 AM and 3 PM for 550 B for ordinary and 610 B for VIP cabin one way. It's two hour trip with terrible movies shown in the ordinary cabin. Pickup from the hotel is included if you stay close to the [peer](#).

[Up](#)

Ko Tao (04/07)

Accommodation:

Ban's Diving Resort
3/1 Moon 1

Koh Tao

www.amazingkohtao.com

The resort has an office right next to the entrance of the peer opposite shop 7even11. Transfer to the resort will be arranged from here and is free of charge if you had made a reservation. Its 20 minutes away from the peer on foot.

A beautiful garden area and a 15 meter pool are surrounded by the hotel complex. A [single](#) with fan and cold [shower](#) is 400 B or 200 B if you go diving with them. They are fairly clean and towels are provided but the bathroom has no hanger for them. No mosquito prevention nowhere and no possibility to hang your own. Also the windows has no grids. Nor against mosquitos neither against burglars which is a big minus because no lockers are available. Only the safe in the office can be used.

Useful:

PADI-Courses

Ban's Diving Resort offer the open water (3 1/2 days) for 9.800 B, advanced open water (2 days) for 10.600 B and CPR-Trainig (1/2 day) for 3.150 B.

Open Water

The OW started at 4 PM at the first day with the instruction for the next days, the handover of books and dive table. Instruction of the risks and one hour video lesson about the diving equipment and precautions from a terrible copied DVD. Homework for the next morning: Around 100 pages of the dive instruction book.

Next day at 9:30 AM [theory](#) part till 11:30 AM. At 1:30 PM after lunch break got the equipment ready and went for the pool. First dive lesson for approximately 45 minutes in a group of six. Debriefing at 5 PM with additional homework for another 80 pages.

Second day started with theory part at 9:30 till 11 AM. Got onto the dive [boat](#) at 1 PM. First dive for 40 minutes at a maximum of 9 meters at a reef with loads of fishes and some [practice](#). One hour rest with a [coffee](#) break on the boat and second dive at another spot for 40 minutes at 10 meters with some practice again. Returned to Ko Tao at 5 PM.

Third day started 7:30 AM with the same dives like yesterday with less practice and more fun. Back to Ko Tao at 1 PM. At 6:30 PM they showed the video taken from the last dive and available for 2.000 B.

Advanced Open Water

Started at 9:30 AM by giving an overview of the schedule, some slight theory and practice at the beach for orientation by using a compass. 1 PM started with the boat to the Twins. Small group of six divers with good [instructions](#) of the dive site including drawing of maps on own waterproof whiteboards. First dive for orientations skills. Half dive instructed, the rest on own choice with the buddy. Second dive at White Rocks for orientation and the "naturalist". Nice briefing with drawings and additional own fish identification board. Completely selfplanned dive with the buddy together. Had to identify 10 different species under water and returned with a safety stop after 40 minutes with 19 meters maximum. Dismissal at 5:30 PM.

Second day started 9:30 AM with theory lesson how to use the wheel for multilevel dives. 1 PM on the boat to Chumphon Pinnacle with instruction for the 30 meter dive. Eight diver and instructor for 10 minutes at 30 meters and 30 minutes at 16 meters. Saw reef sharks while diving and a whale from the boat passing 100 meters away. The night dive at the same day started 6:30 PM with delay to White Rock. Very chaotic start because two groups where entering the site at the same time. Tricky in the dark to stick to your group. Stingrays discovered but nothing special. Dismissed at 8:40 PM.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

The CPR course is good to keep updated of this lifesaving practice. You learn how to respond at a first emergency help. The course last from 9:30 AM till 3:30 PM with short lunch break with videos, manual practice at a dummy, loads of discussions and questioning. Very recommendable not only for divers

The four passport pictures for the PADI-Identification-Card can be taken at the reception for 200 B.

Travel:

To Ko Phi Phi

Full package trip to Ko Phi Phi cost 950 B. The boat leaves Ko Tao at 9 PM from the peer. Be early to get one mattress on the [higher](#) floor which is much comfortable than the [lower](#) but do not choose one too close to a window or opening. It can get very wet especially in the monsoon season. Pillows and blankets are provided but nothing is available on board. So stock up at the 7even11 next to the peer before you enter. Arriving at Sura Thani at 5 AM and transfer to a waiting area for further arrivals. Breakfast and toilets are available. 6:30 AM transfer with a mini bus to Krabi. Waiting at a restaurant for the large bus to the ferry port. 10 AM at the port but ferry already gone at 9:50 AM. Waiting at a restaurant for the ferry at 12 AM. Arriving at Ko Phi Phi at 1:30 PM. Convert of vouchers from the travel agency caused no problem.

Recommendable.

[Up](#)

Krabi (06/98)

The paradise of rock climbing is in Hat Kai Leh near Krabi.

Accommodation:

You can get a bungalow for 120 bhat with own shower/toilet in the offseason (northeast end of the beach, walk right-hand side from the harbor to the end of the way). Food is expensive (60 bhat and more for a meal) so carry as much as you can from Krabi (food/bhat).

Sight Seeing:

At a restday you should visit The Lagoon. Wear long clothes and good shoes for this.

Useful:

Solid rocks with grip and good hooks are located directly at the beach. 300 routes mostly from 6b to 8a. For me the best area was Low Tide Wall (6c to 8b) but mostly you have to take a boat because remember the name (10 bhat p.p. one way).

There are a several climbing schools in Hut Kai Leh were you can rent all necessary gear (shoes, harness and chalkbag a day for 200 bhat) or discover the vertical with a guide.

In peak season there are over 250 climbers but at low season (early June) I had counted 40 to 60 climbers.

Travel:

To Hat Kai Leh you have to take a boat from Krabi (45 min / 50 bhat).

If you want to travel from Krabi to Ko Phang Nga you can bargain for the combi ticket for 250 bhat.

[Up](#)

Mae Hong Son (06/98)

Accommodation:

Stay at Prinze Guesthouse for 60 bhat (single with van). Friendly staff and they can organize nice tours into the hills (also to poppyfields) including a nice dinner.

[Up](#)

Mae Sai (06/98)

Accommodation:

Accommodation for 50 bhat for single with van, shower/toilet is available (from Tachilek bridge over the river, first street right, 200m right-hand side. Look for the small sign "Guesthouse").

[Up](#)

Pai (06/98)

Accommodation:

A single room in the Duam Guesthouse close to the bus terminal will be able for 50 bhat.

[Up](#)

Phuket (04/07)

Accommodation:

ON-ON Hotel
19 Phang-Nga Road
Tel.: 076-211154

www.phuketdir.com/marktravel

This old-style hotel with wooden walls, grown infrastructure over several years is cheap and the cleanliness is related to the [price](#) quite high. It's calm, the windows have mosquito protection and a net in the room. A very friendly and helpful travel agency is located at the entrance as all other necessities too. [Map](#)

Recommendable because of the price.

Travel:

Airport

The first airport bus from the main bus terminal leaves at 5:30 AM for 82 B. Except weekend and public holidays. [Timetable](#).

In this case the taxi from ON-ON Hotel to the airport is 400 B booked at Mark Travel & Service inside ON-ON Hotel. The normal taxi is 500 B and the scooter taxi 300 B without bargain.

No additional charge at the airport, easy check in, less buisy at the early morning.

To Bangkok

www.fly12go.com offer flights from Phuket for 1750 to 2250 B every day at 8:10 AM.

[Up](#)

Soppong (06/98)

Accommodation:

A bungalow at the Jungle Guesthouse will cost 80 bhat in low season. The meals are cheaper in the center of the village.

Sight Seeing:

The Tham Lot cave is very impressive. Carry a good torch if you want to save the money (100 bhat) for the bright light of the gaslamps from the guides. But they are really good especially for taking pictures without flashlight.

If you woun't pay for crossing the cave river (100 bhat p.p.) follow the sign "Temple" outside the cave and at the sign "swifts/ birds" leave the path right-hand like the sign shows you. You will come to the back entrance of the cave and can discover the other part on your own.

[Up](#)

Trat (06/98)

Useful:

There is no possibility to change money in the offseason at weekend. Try the drugstore with a poor rate for cash dollars.

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