



About THAILAND

General Information



National Flag:

Thailand's national flag, ceremoniously raised each morning, is composed of five horizontal bands of red, white, and blue. The harmony of design expresses the complimentary nature of these three pillars of the Thai nation. This tri-colored flag, called in Thai the "Trirong", first introduced by King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) in 1917, succeeded an earlier design that placed a white elephant (emblem of the absolute monarch) on a red background.



*Red represents nation.
White evokes religion.
Blue symbolizes the monarchy.*

Location:



Thailand is situated in the heart of the Southeast Asian mainland, covering an area of 513,115 sq.km. and extends about 1,620 kilometres from north to south and 775 kilometres from east to west. Thailand borders the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Union of Myanmar to the North, the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Gulf of Thailand to the East, the Union of Myanmar and the Indian Ocean to the West, and Malaysia to the south.



*C*apital: Bangkok

*M*ajor Cities:

North: Chiangmai, South: Songkla, Central region: Ayutthaya and Chonburi, North Eastern: Nakhon Ratchasima and Khon Kaen



*H*istorical Background:

There are conflicting opinions as to the origins of the Thais. Three decades ago it could be said with presumed certainty that the Thais originated in *Northwestern Szechuan in China* about 4,500 years ago and later migrated down to their present homeland. However, this theory has been altered by the discovery of remarkable prehistoric artifacts in *the village of Ban Chiang in the Nong Han District of Udon Thani Province in the Northeast*. These include evidence of bronze metallurgy going back 3,500 years, as well as other indications of a far more sophisticated culture than any previously suspected by archaeologists. It now appears that the Thais might have originated here in Thailand and later scattered to various parts of Asia, including some parts of China.

Siam is the name by which the country was known to the world until 1939 and again between 1945 and 1949. On May 11, 1949, an official proclamation changed the name of the country to "**Prathet Thai**", or "**Thailand**", by which it has since been known. The word "**Thai**" means "**free**", and therefore "**Thailand**" means "**Land of the Free.**"





Climate:

Thailand is a warm and rather humid tropical country with monsoonal climate. Temperatures are highest in March and April with average temperature of 28 degree Celsius to 38 degrees Celsius and humidity averaging between 82.8 percent to 73 percent.



Seasons: Dry: March to May, Rainy: June to October, Cool: November to February.

Dress: Most Thai people dress in a casual western fashion, but collared shirts and slacks should be worn in class and during formal occasions. Loose fitting, comfortable, cotton clothing is best during the hot humid months.



Population: The population in Thailand is approximately 63 million, of which around 5.6 million live in the capital city, Bangkok.

Language: The national and official language is Thai while English is widely spoken and understood in major cities, particularly in Bangkok and in business circles.

Business Hours: Government and business offices are open from 8:30 to 16:30 hours, Monday to Friday.

Electricity: 220 volts 50 cycles throughout the country



*B*anks:

The country's central bank is the Bank of Thailand. Major Thai commercial banks include the Bangkok Bank, Siam Commercial Bank, Krung Thai Bank, Kasikorn Bank and Thai Military Bank. Business hours are 08:30 - 15:30 hours, Monday to Friday. Several international banks also have offices in Thailand.

*C*urrency:

The Baht is the standard currency unit.

- Bank Notes: 20, 50, 100, 500, 1,000 baht
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, and 10 baht (38 Baht is approximately 1 US\$)



*N*ewspaper & Media:

There are over 100 radio stations in Bangkok. All are state-owned but private companies are given air time concessions for their programmes. Broadcasting is done in both Thai and English, with news broadcasting every hour. There are over 20 Thai morning dailies in Bangkok. Some of the leading Thai papers include Thai Rath, Daily News, Kom Chad Luke, Matichon, Naew Na, Post Today, Krung Thep Turakij and the Manager. Two major English-language dailies are the Bangkok Post and The Nation. There are numerous English-language magazines and local publications in Japanese, Chinese and other European languages. Many major international newspapers, magazines and books are also widely available.

There are 6 general television stations, Channels 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and ITV broadcast local variety shows, newscasts and live coverage of special events. Cable TV is also available by subscription.

Thailand's freedom of the press is considered the strongest in Southeast Asia as evidenced by hundreds of Thai-language publications on virtually every subject.

*R*egulations for Foreign Visitors to Thailand:

Foreign nationals visiting Thailand must possess valid passports or accepted travel documents and appropriate visas before entering the country. Visitors from certain countries are permitted to stay up to 15 days without visas, provided they possess tickets confirming departure within 15 days, while visitors from several other countries are allowed to apply for tourists visas at all ports of entry. Transit visas are granted for up to 30 days and tourist visas for up to 60 days. Non-immigrants, diplomatic and official visas are valid for up to 90 days.





*B*angkok Suvarnabhumi Airport:

Bangkok Suvarnabhumi (*meaning Golden Land*) Airport is among the world's most stylish, yet technologically advanced crossroads for global passenger and air cargo operations. With 560,000 square metres of space, the seven storey passenger terminal is the world's largest under a single roof, catering for both international and domestic flights by over 90 airlines. A miracle of innovation, it features the most sophisticated design, security and passenger service facilities. The traveller's experience in Bangkok is now easier, more efficient and pleasurable.



*H*ealth and Medical Facilities:

Bangkok has numerous clinics and hospitals catering to a variety of needs. Major public and private hospitals are equipped with the latest medical technology and internationally qualified specialists. Almost all pharmaceuticals are widely available.

*T*elephone Services:

Public telephones are operated either by card or coin. Several types of cards are available for use in different telephones. Long-distance calling rates are cheaper after 9 pm.

Direct Assistance: 1133 (Bangkok) and 183 (upcountry)

Long distance Service: 100

IDD: 001+country code + area code + phone number

AT&T USA Direct Service: 001-999-11111

*E*mergency Calls:

Police: 191

Fire Brigade: 199

Tourist Police: 1155

Tourist Service Centre: 1155

Tourist Information (TAT Head Office): +66(0)2250-5500

Ambulance (BKK): +66(0)2252-2171-5

