



Phra Sumen For Thailand Countdown



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BANGKOK

Samut Prakan



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BANGKOK BANGKOK

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The Grand Palace

BANGKOK

Bangkok was founded in 1782 by the first monarch of the present Chakri dynasty. It is now the country's spiritual, cultural, diplomatic, commercial and educational hub. It covers an area of more than 1,500 square kilometres, and it is home to approximately ten million people or more than 10% of the country's population. Over the last few decades, Thailand's capital city, Bangkok, has changed into a modern, exciting and sophisticated city. It offers to visitors not only the cosmopolitan amenities they would expect from other big cities, but also a unique treasure trove of cultural attractions. Thailand, in the heart of Southeast Asia, was never colonised and thus kept its unique culture and heritage intact. Bangkok offers visitors the opportunity to experience fascinating glimpses of Thailand's gentle culture amidst the bustle of the great and dynamic metropolis. This great city has had astounding success in combining the ancient and modern world.

For tourists, Bangkok has a feast of attractions to offer. The city is dotted with 400 glittering Buddhist temples of great beauty and fascination, magnificent palaces, classical dance extravaganzas, numerous shopping centres and traditional ways of life, especially along the "Venice of the East" timeless canals and the Chao Phraya River or the "River of Kings" that wind through the city. It is worth taking a trip along its waters before exploring further into different canals to take a glimpse of old Bangkok.

TEMPLES AND PALACES

Bangkok takes great pride in its large number of fascinating temples around the capital. The major ones can be found in the Rattanakosin



The Grand Palace & Wat Phra Kaeo
(The Temple of the Emerald Buddha)

area on the western side of the city. The Rattanakosin area is called an island but has been incorporated into the city. A trip there will allow visitors to see many attractions within a short distance of one another.

The Grand Palace & Wat Phra Kaeo (The Temple of the Emerald Buddha)

The splendid Grand Palace enclosure is home to many ornate temples and buildings with a variety of architectural styles. Gold leaf, reflective tiling and Buddha images are to be seen everywhere. The magnificent Wat Phra Kaeo, a treasure trove of Thai arts and home to the Emerald Buddha, Thailand's most revered Buddha image, is at the heart of the complex, but there is much more places of interest to be seen in the Grand Palace compound; such as, the Royal Thai Decorations and Coin Pavilion, where a permanent exhibition of royal regalia, decorations, medals and coins dating back to the early 11th century is on display.

The complex is open everyday from 8.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. except on special days designated



Ananda Samakhom Throne Hall

for royal ceremonies to be announced later. Visitors are advised that polite and modest dress is essential. Tel. +66 2623 5500 ext. 3103-4 Website: www.palaces.thai.net

Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles

Is located at the European classical Ratsadakorn Bhibhatana Building to the right of the visitors' entrance to the Grand Palace. Highlights are H.M. Queen Sirikit's personal collection of dresses designed and tailored from Thai textiles by international and local designers. The Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles collects, preserves and serves as a centre for textiles from East, South, and Southeast Asia with an emphasis on Thailand and its royal court, and the exhibitions telling the story of how H.M. Queen Sirikit has helped turn Thai silk from being a local handicraft into a symbol of Thailand through her Support Foundation founded in 1976. The Museum is open everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., entry fee is included in the Grand Palace fee. To visit the Museum without visiting the Grand Palace, fees are 150 Baht for adults, 80 Baht for senior citizens, 50 Baht for youth, and

free for children under 12 years old. For more information, visit www.qsmthailand.org.

Ananda Samakhom Throne Hall

Located on Ratchadamnoen Nok Avenue, this beautiful Throne Hall used marble for construction and was built in the Italian Renaissance architectural style in the reign of King Rama V. The ceiling of the dome is highlighted by exquisite fresco paintings of important royal functions during the reign of King Rama I up to King Rama VI of the Royal House of Chakri.

Nowadays, Ananda Samakhom Throne Hall is primarily used to hold important royal and state ceremonies. The Hall used to welcome leaders from many countries participating in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2003 hosted by the Royal Thai Government. The Hall opens only on the 2nd Saturday of January (Children's day). However, the outdoor portion is open everyday from 9.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Phaya Thai Palace

Located on Ratchawithi Road, Phaya Thai Palace was constructed during the reign of King Rama V, and had a major restoration in the reign of King Rama VI. The museum is open for public to go inside only on Saturday at 9.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m., but visitors are welcomed to walk inside the palace compound everyday.

Wat Mahathat

Located across the street from Wat Phra Kaeo on the west side of Sanam Luang, Wat Mahathat, known as the Temple of the Great Relic, is the national centre for the Mahanikai monastic sect. The temple houses Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, one of the two highest seats of Buddhist learning in Thailand and offers



Vimanmek Mansion

meditation instruction in English for interested visitors. The temple is open everyday and admission is free. For more information on the Meditation Centre, contact Tel. +66 2222 6011.

Vimanmek Mansion

This is the largest golden teakwood building in the world, built in 1901 by King Chulalongkorn the Great (King Rama V) as a royal residence. It is located behind the National Assembly Building. The 3-storey mansion contains 81 rooms, halls and antechambers. It was renovated and extensively restored by the order of H.M. Queen Sirikit to house priceless treasures and a collection of late 19th and early 20th century royal memorabilia.

Situated on the east wing of Vimanmek Mansion is Abhisek Dusit Throne Hall, a one-storey teak building built in the reign of King Rama V. The Hall is now Thailand's first handicraft museum where H.M. the Queen

collects handicraft masterpieces, created by members of her SUPPORT Foundation. In the museum, visitors will find handicrafts; such as, nielloware, Thai silk with various unique designs, Liphao basketry made from finely split jungle vines like beautiful trays and handbags studded with jewels in different designs; such as, the green metallic wings of an indigenous beetle.

Near the entrance to Vimanmek Mansion is the Royal Carriage Museum with splendid examples of ancient horse-drawn carriages.

Vimanmek Mansion is open everyday from 9.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Tickets are available until 3.00 p.m. There are Thai classical dance performances at 10.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. For Thais have guide conducted tour in Thai language at 10.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. and English language at 11.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. Polite and modest attire is required. Tel. +66 2281 5454, +66 2698 6054 Website: www.vimanmek.com

Royal Elephant National Museum

This is the first building on the right when entering the Vimanmek compound, containing a life-like model of the white elephant. The myth and legend of the white elephant began in Southeast Asia - The Land of the White Elephant. In the story of the Lord Buddha, the white elephant is connected to fertility and knowledge. On the eve of giving birth to the Lord Buddha, his mother dreams that a white elephant comes to present her with a lotus, a symbol of purity and knowledge.

The white elephant is above an ordinary tusker. In Thailand, this creature is sacred as it represents the prosperity of the town. Indeed, the Siamese put the white elephant on their new flag. When elephants were no longer so vital for warfare, elephant hunts became less common, and fewer of the rare albino elephants were found. The Siamese king passed a law demanding that any white elephant found in the kingdom had to be presented to the king. He sent out scouting parties and offered rewards. The discovery of a white elephant became a special event, a time for national celebration. In this museum, the visitor can see pictures of elephants promoted to the title of "royal elephants" by past kings. The museum opens everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Admission is free. Tel. +66 2282 3336

Wat Pho (Temple of the Reclining Buddha)

Neighbouring the Grand Palace enclave, this temple is considered the largest in Bangkok. The famous Reclining Buddha, constructed in 1832, is enshrined in this temple. This 46-metre long and 15-metre high gold-plated Reclining Buddha, the eyes and feet inlaid with mother-of-pearl brings to mind the Lord Buddha's entry into Nirvana. The sole also shows 108 auspicious

characteristics of the true "Buddha". For more information, please contact, Tel: +66 2226 0335

Wat Pho was also the first centre of public education in the Kingdom. Nowadays, it is an important centre for the teaching and administering of traditional Thai massage. Wat Pho is open everyday from 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Modest attire is required. Tel. +66 2622 3551, +66 2622 3533 Website: www.watpo-massage.com

Wat Arun (The Temple of Dawn)

This famous Bangkok landmark is on the Thon Buri side of the Chao Phraya River, directly opposite the Grand Palace complex and easily accessible by boat from the Bangkok side. The temple dates back to the Ayutthaya period and was enlarged by King Rama II and King Rama III. Renovations were completed in the reign of King Rama IV. The Emerald Buddha was enshrined in this temple for a brief period before King Rama I built the Grand Palace and Wat Phra Kaeo on the Bangkok side.

The landmark of this temple is a 79-metre-tall massive central pagoda, "Phra Prang", and four smaller ones at each corner. The ornamentation of the central pagoda consists of encrusted pieces of porcelain which sparkle in the sun. Despite its name, the best photographic opportunities are in the late afternoon with the sun setting in the red sky behind the temple.

To visit the temple, shuttle boats from the Tha Tian Pier at the south-west side of the Grand Palace and Wat Phra Kaeo area are provided regularly. The Chao Phraya Express Boat stops at the Tha Tian Pier and there are several Thon Buri canal tours, which include the temple. The temple is open from 7.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Website: www.watarun.org





Wat Traimitr (Temple of the Golden Buddha)

Wat Traimitr (Temple of the Golden Buddha)

Located at the end of Chinatown's Yaowarat Road, this temple houses the extraordinary 700-year-old golden Buddha image, a seated figure composed entirely of five and a half tons of gold. Previously, it had been covered with plaster and once broken off, the true treasure beneath was suddenly revealed - the figure was found to be composed entirely of gold. It is now an important and sacred Buddha image of unique beauty. The temple is open everyday from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Website: www.wat-traimitr-withayaram.com Tel: +66 8 9002 2700.

Wat Benchamabophit (The Marble Temple)

Situated on Si Ayutthaya Road, near the intersection with Rama V Road, this unique marble temple was constructed during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868 - 1910 A.D.). Its proportions are classically beautiful, with European influences evident in its stained glass windows and the use of Carrara marble. The temple houses a superb cloister collection of bronze Buddha images and many reckon the temple to be one of the finest in the world as far as its craftsmanship and architectural splendour are concerned. It attracts large numbers of visitors every year. The temple is open everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Website: www.watbencha.com

Wat Suthat

Located on Bamrung Mueang Road, the temple is renowned for its superb murals and elaborate woodcarving door panels created during the reign of King Rama II. The preaching hall contains a collection of gilded Buddha images. The temple was constructed in the early 19th century and there are four smaller chapels constructed on each of its corners.

The main Buddha image, Phra Si Sakayamuni was originally cast in the Sukhothai period (1238-1438 A.D.). Eight-metre tall, on a six-metre pedestal, the image is the largest bronze-cast one in the kingdom and considered one of the most beautiful Buddha images in Thailand. The cloisters within the complex are pleasantly quiet and contain many Buddha images. The temple is open everyday from 8.30 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Wat Ratchabophit

South of Wat Suthat is the impressive Wat Ratchabophit, built in the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910 A.D.). Its most striking features are the 5-colour porcelain mosaics encrusted in the main stupa. The architecture of the main chapel is in Thai-style, while its interior decorations reflect a European influence with some Gothic details. Visitors will particularly be impressed with the delicate mother-of-pearl inlays and the exquisite bas-reliefs on the window and door panels of the main chapel. The temple is open everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Admission is free.

Wat Saket (The Golden Mount)

Located near Ratchadamnoen Avenue, this temple houses a 58-metre-high stupa surmounted by a golden cupola. The relic of the Lord Buddha is enshrined here. Visitors can climb the 318 steps to the cupola. Before entering the cupola area; however, it is interesting to see Thais placing flowers, lighting candles and paying homage to Buddha images. This room beneath the cupola is redolent of sandalwood and incense attracts many Thai visitors. The climb to the top gradually reveals views of the temple below and the panorama of Bangkok. At the top of the edifice, the visitor can see the golden cupola entirely covered with small golden squares. These reflect the sun which give the building its name the Golden Mount.

On each side of the square enclosure, a panoramic view of Bangkok is offered, especially of the Rattanakosin area, the enclave which houses the Grand Palace and other historic buildings. The Golden Mount understandably attracts many visitors.



Wat Ratchanatdaram (Loha Prasat)

It is an unusual and pleasant experience to enjoy the silence of the cupola area in this bustling city. The temple is open daily from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. and admission is 10 baht. Website: www.watsraket.com Tel: +66 2222 6935

Wat Ratchanatdaram

Located behind the King Rama III Memorial Statue on Ratchadamnoen Avenue, this temple is considered one of the most original temples in Bangkok. It was constructed during the reign of King Rama III. The temple contains a pyramid-shaped Loha Prasat (metal-spired Pagoda) inspired by the one in Sri Lanka. The



Suan Pakkad Palace & Museum

Loha Prasat stands 36-metres high with 37 surrounding spires, the only one of its kind left in the world. In front of this temple, there is a memorial statue of King Rama III and a Pavilion “Maha Chetsadabodin,” which is used for performing an official welcoming ceremony to the visit of Heads of States. On the opposite side of the temple, there is Mahakan Fortress, which is a part of an ancient city wall. The temple is open daily from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Admission is free. Tel: +66 2224 8807

Wat Indhara Wihan

On Wisutkasat Road, visitors will enjoy a visit to this temple with its impressive 32-metre-high standing Buddha image and other buildings within its complex which are well worth seeing. The temple is open daily from 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. and there is no charge for admission. Website: www.watindharaviharn.org

Wat Si Sudaram or Wat Chi Pa Khao

The temple was built during the Ayutthaya period and renovated by King Rama I.

The interesting buildings including Tam Nak Daeng (a pavilion), Sala Kan Parian (a sermon hall) and the residence of Sunthon Phu (the greatest poet of the Rattanakosin period, designated by UNESCO as a classic poet of the world), are located within the temple compound. Moreover, visitors can enjoy feeding a number of freshwater fish here.

Wat Pho Bang-o

Constructed during the reign of King Rama III, this temple has a chapel with a wooden roof and is famous for its mural inside the chapel. The mural was painted several centuries ago. Open everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Wat Suwannaram

Visitors will be fascinated with the murals depicting the life of the Lord Buddha and the Buddha image of Subduing Mara (the Buddhist devil) inside the main chapel of this large royal temple. The temple was constructed during the reign of King Rama I and subsequently renovated during the reign of King Rama III. These works of art from the early Rattanakosin period (19th century) are considered some of the best surviving mural paintings in Bangkok.

Wat Amphawan

Constructed during the late Ayutthaya period, this temple houses Ho Trai (a magnificent Thai-style wooden scripture hall), which is situated in the middle of a pond. Open everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Suan Pakkad Palace & Museum

Located on Si Ayutthaya Road not far from the intersection of Phaya Thai, Suan Pakkad Palace is the former residence of Princess Chumbhot of Nagara Svarga, one of Thailand’s leading gardeners and art collectors. In the compound

of the palace, visitors will see 8 traditional Thai houses. Collections include: Asian art and antiques, seashells, mineral crystals, pottery and bronze objects from the prehistoric burial ground Ban Chiang, in Northeast Thailand. The complex is open everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Tel: +66 2245 6368 Website: www.suanpakkad.com (Please, contact before visit there.)

MUSEUMS

Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall

Located on Ratchadamnoen Road, this exhibition hall will take visitor to experience the best of Rattanakosin in a day through exhibitions in 9 rooms that spread out on 3-floor building. The exhibition includes the history of Rattanakosin since the beginning of the Rattanakosin period, the royal culture, the Ratanakosin communities, traditional Thai performances and ceremonies, and the major tourist attractions in Bangkok. After finish travelling back in time through the interactive displays and multimedia presentations, visitors can then go on the rooftop and enjoy a cup of coffee while viewing the panoramic scenery of Ratchadamnoen Avenue. Open Tuesday – Sunday and public holidays from 10.00 a.m. – 7.00 p.m. They provided in tour session which had every minutes and the last session on 7.00 p.m. For more information, visit www.nitas.rattanakosin.com. Tel: +66 2621 0044, +66 2226 5047-8.

Bangkok National Museum

Near the National Theatre and not far from Sanam Luang, one of the largest and most comprehensive museums in Southeast Asia, the National Museum houses an important



Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall

and superb collection of artefacts and objets d’art ranging from the Bronze Age to the Bangkok period. The complex consists of several old and beautiful buildings once used as a palace. The museum is open everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., except on Monday, Tuesday

Royal Barges National Museum

Located on Khlong Bangkok Noi off the Chao Phraya River and not far from the Phra Pinklao Bridge, this shed has a display of several ornately carved royal barges with unique designs and decorative details. These barges are used on royal and official occasions and formerly served as war vessels. The most beautiful and well-known barge “Suphannahong” is used by the king only when he makes his royal river procession for the Kathin Ceremony, a Buddhist tradition of offering robes to monks, usually held during October or November. There is also “Narai Songsuban Ratchakan Thi Kao”, the latest royal barge especially built on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of His



Museum of Siam

Majesty the King's Accession to the throne in 1996. The royal barges were also used during the Rattanakosin bicentennial celebrations and the reception ceremony of the APEC 2003. The shed is open to the public everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Tel. +66 2424 0004

Prasat Museum

Located at No. 9 Krung Thep Kritha Road Soi 4, Bang Kapi in the eastern area of the city, the museum houses a vast collection of artefacts from prehistoric to Rattanakosin periods (from 1782 A.D. to the present). Within the museum complex, there are various styles of architecture, like a baroque building, a smaller replica of the Red Palace in the National Museum, and a replica of Ho Trai Klang Nam (Tripitaka Pavilion - a library for Buddhist scriptures) of Wat Yai Suwannaram. Prasat Museum is open

everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. except Monday. The tours must be arranged one day in advance and the admission fee is 1,000 Baht per person, but for a group of 2 or more people, the admission fee is 500 Baht per person. Tel. +66 2379 3601 (Please, contact before visit there)

Museum of Siam

Located on Sanam Chai Road, Museum of Siam displays the story of Thailand, Thai people, and Thai identity through a series of fascinating exhibition. Visitors will discover the interesting stories, some are hidden treasures that required close study at the exhibition, through a variety of exhibition techniques, interactive displays, light and sound presentation, and modern technology. Open Tuesday – Sunday from 10.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m. For more information, contact Tel. +66 2225 2777, www. museumsiam.org.



Siriraj Museum

Kamthieng House Museum

Located in the garden of the Siam Society on Sukhumvit Road Soi 21 (Asok), this newly renovated and refurbished 200-year-old northern Thai-Lanna-style wooden house contains a collection of traditional tools and implements used by Northern Thai farmers and fishermen. It is open from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. from Tuesday to Saturday. Tel. +66 2661 6470-7

Bangkok Dolls Museum

Located at 85 Soi Ratchataphan (Soi Mo Leng), off Ratchaprarop Road, the museum houses an interesting collection of handmade Thai and foreign dolls. Bangkok Dolls have also won several awards for their miniature creations. The museum is open everyday from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. except for Sunday and

national holidays and admission is free. Tel. 0 2245 3008 Website: www.bangkokdolls.com

Museum of Imaging Technology

Located in the same building with the Faculty of Science, Chulalongkorn University, this is the first camera and photograph museum established in Thailand and Asia. Historic photographs and imaging equipment, as well as its technological evolution are on display. Modern photographic arts, techniques and printing technology are also exhibited. The museum is open Monday to Friday from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. www.sc.chula.ac.th.photo

Siriraj Museum

Siriraj is one of Bangkok's most prestigious hospitals. It has another claim to fame, its Forensics Museum, a little chamber of horrors.



Madame Tussauds Bangkok

Among several other museums, the best ones to see are the Museum of Criminology and the Museum of Anatomy. Here the visitor can meet Si Oui, or rather his embalmed body. This serial killer had the appalling habit of eating a victim's liver. Now he stands forever in a glass case, defiant to the end. The bodies of various other criminals, the embalmed corpses of suicides, the victims of hideous accidents and murders are also on display. There are photographs of the results of accidents as well. In the Museum of Anatomy, visitors can see embalmed legs, arms, internal organs and organs of malformed humans. If this is not enough, move on to the Museum of Parasitology. The museum is fascinating, but only for those who have a very strong stomach. It is open from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on Monday to Saturday. www.si.mahidol.ac.th/museums/en/index.htm.

National Science Museum

The astonishing geometric architecture of the National Science Museum attracts not only

children but also adults for its entertaining combination of science and technology. The museum provides both education and entertainment, along with exhibits of technological advancements in agriculture by local Thais. The museum is divided into two halls: Hall I is about scientific knowledge, and nature from around the globe is on display in Hall II. Open from Tuesday to Sunday 9.30 a.m. - 4.00 p.m., weekend and public holidays 9.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Tel. +66 2577 9999 Website: www.nsm.or.th

Science Centre for Education

Situated near the Eastern Bus Terminal (Ekkamai) on Sukhumvit Road, this exhibition centre houses an interesting aquarium, computer world, a planetarium, as well as many devices created for fun and education. The science centre consists of two sections. The first is the Bangkok Planetarium, where you can explore the stars and sky. Open on Tuesdays - Fridays at 11.00 a.m. / 2.00 p.m. and Saturdays, Sundays at 10.00 a.m. / 11.00 a.m. / 1.30 p.m. / 2.30 p.m. The second part is the science exhibition centre. Open Tuesday to Friday from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Madame Tussauds Bangkok

Madame Tussauds, the world-famous wax museum, has opened its 10th attraction on the 6th Floor of Siam Discovery Shopping Centre. Displaying here are over 70 figures of Hollywood stars, local celebrities, and sport heroes. The special feature of Madame Tussauds Bangkok is that visitors can take picture, hug or even touch the wax figures. It is open everyday from 10.00 a.m. - 9.00 p.m. For more information, contact Tel. 0 2658 0060 or visit www.madame-tussauds.com/bangkok.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Sanam Luang (Phramen Ground)

Sanam Luang, an oval public area in front of the Grand Palace, is used for various royal ceremonies including Royal Cremations and the Royal Ploughing Ceremony held each May. Located near its borders are several important institutions; such as, the Fine Arts Department, Thammasat University, Bangkok National Museum and National Gallery.

San Lak Mueang (City Pillar Shrine)

On the southeast corner of Sanam Luang, this shrine houses a city pillar placed there by King Rama I to mark his new capital, Bangkok. It is reputed by many to have the power of granting wishes. The city pillar is made of the wood of "Javanese Cassia" and contains the city's horoscope.

The Giant Swing

This unusual 200-year-old red swing outside Wat Suthat was once used in Brahmanic ceremonies to honour the highest God Shiva. Furthermore, it was used competitively in a contest designed to seek the brave man who could swing the highest to seize a money bag from a 25-metre-high pole. But the contest was outlawed many years ago, when accidents and deaths became too common.

Phra Sumeru Fortress

Located on the corner where Phra Athit Road and Phra Sumeru Road meet, this fortress was constructed in the reign of King Rama I in 1783 along with 14 other fortresses and battlements surrounding the capital. Its shape is an octagonal one with three levels. Inside the walls, there are steps leading up to the fortress. Altogether, there are 38 rooms for ammunition



Phra Sumeru Fortress

and weapons. The roof collapsed during the reign of King Rama IV or V, but was restored by the Fine Arts Department in the early 1980s using old photographs as a guide. Nowadays, there is a small park surrounding the fortress. Visitors can enjoy a pleasant walk along the Chao Phraya River all the way to Phra Pinklao Bridge.

Santi Chai Prakan Pavilion and Public Park

Located near Phra Sumeru Fortress, this lush park offers a magnificent view of Chao Phraya River and Rama VIII Bridge. It was constructed to celebrate the auspicious occasion of the 72nd birthday anniversary of H.M. the King in 1999.

The Erawan Shrine

At the corner of Ratchadamri and Phloen Chit Roads, countless Thais and other Asian tourists who seek good luck visit this very popular shrine, as it is reputed to have the power of granting wishes. Many come to pay homage by offering flower garlands and pray to the four-headed image of the Hindu God "Brahma" to grant their wishes. To reinforce the



The Erawan Shrine

wish or express appreciation to the God, they will donate wooden elephants or hire a group of Thai classical dancers to perform a dance with live music. The number of dancers and the length of the performance are directly tied to the generosity of their donation. All around plumes of incense smoke rise so thickly that they overcome the traffic fumes at this busy intersection.

Jim Thompson's House

An early partner in the Oriental Hotel, Jim Thompson, an American entrepreneur who lived in Thailand, decided to devote his energies to develop a thriving Thai silk industry. Due to his efforts, Thai silk is now famous all over the world and justly renowned for its quality, colours and patterns. Thompson, trained as an architect and gardener, also built a fine collection of traditional Thai houses, fashioned into one dwelling where he lived during his lifetime. After his tragic death, the house remains preserved as a museum containing a priceless collection of Asian objets d'art. The museum, located centrally at Soi



Jim Thompson's House

Kasemsan 2 on Rama I Road, is accessible by bus, taxi and the sky train. The museum opens daily from 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. with the last tour at 6.00 p.m. Tel. +66 2216 7368. Website: www.jimthompsonhouse.com

Queen Saovabha Memorial Institute (The Snake Farm)

Located near Chulalongkorn Hospital, on the corner of Henri Dunant and Rama IV Roads, the Snake Farm contains an interesting collection of poisonous snakes which are "milked" for their venom from which anti-snake bite serum is produced.

It is open from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. on weekday and 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. on holidays. Visitors can watch the venom extracted from the snakes by experts, in demonstrations at 11.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. on weekdays and at 10.30 a.m. on holidays. Tel. +66 2252 0161-4, +66 2252 0167 Website: www.saovabha.com

Sea Life Bangkok Ocean World

The biggest aquarium in Southeast Asia, Siam Ocean World was awarded the outstanding

recreation tourist site, Thailand Tourism Award 2008. Covering an area of over 10,000 square metres, this aquarium features a 270-degree acrylic under ocean tunnel, a panoramic oceanarium with a 360-degree view through a 10.5-metre diameter fishbowl, and an 8-metre deep reef tank. Over 400 species of marine animals are displayed; including, Blue Ring Octopus, Gray Nurse Sharks, Leafy Sea Dragons, and Giant Spider Crabs. Located at Siam Paragon Shopping Complex on Rama I Road, it is open everyday from 10.00 a.m. – 9.00 p.m. For more information, contact Tel. +66 2687 2000 or visit www.sealifebangkok.com

Lumphini Park

The largest park in Bangkok is considered the "green lung" of the city. It is situated between Wireless and Ratchadamri Roads. Lined with trees and shrubs, many paths run through the park, and an artificial lake lies in the centre, where boats can be rented. For Thais and visitors, it is an attractive place to visit and relax. In the morning, joggers use its many paths for keeping fit, and many Thai-Chinese people come here to do Tai Chi. There are restaurants within the park and plenty of places to find a cool drink. Entrances to the park are at all four of its corners. Admission is free, and it is open from 5.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Dusit Zoo

Situated on Rama V Road, in the Dusit District, near the Royal Plaza, Bangkok's oldest zoo contains a collection of popular African and Asian mammals and birds in a botanical garden. With an additional section for children, it is ideal for a family outing. The zoo is open everyday from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Tel. +66 2281 2000, +66 2281 9027-8 Website: www.dusitzoo.org



Sea Life Bangkok Ocean World

Taling Chan Floating Market

Situated on the bank of Bang Khun Si River, this floating market is a place where visitors can experience the river-based way of life of the Thai people in the old days. Fruits, vegetables, handicrafts and food are bought and sold by boat. The market is open on Saturday and Sunday from 7.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Suan Luang Rama IX Park

Opened in 1987 on the east side of Bangkok on Sukhumvit Soi 103 (Udomsuk) is this 200-acre botanical garden, Suan Luang Rama IX Park. It was built to commemorate the 60th birthday of King Rama IX. Here is a haven of peace and quietness, beautiful flowers, shrubs and trees



Siam Park City

where you can enjoy some pristine moments. The park is open from 5.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. Tel. 0 2328 1385-6, 0 2328 1395 Website: www.suanluangrama9.or.th

Siam Park City

On the outskirts of Bangkok in Min Buri district lies this very popular water and amusement park. Some of its attractions are a man-made sea with artificial surf for swimmers, whirlpools, fountains, waterfalls and towering slides. Other attractions include a children's playground, aviaries, an open zoo, a botanical garden and plenty of places where refreshments are available. Opening hours are 10.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Tel. +66 2919 7200-19, +66 2105 4294 Website: www.siamparkcity.com

Safari World

On the perimeter of Bangkok towards Min Buri is this 300-acre complex ideal for a family trip, divided into four sections Safari Park with African and Asian mammals, Bird Park, Macaw Island and Games Corner. The complex is open everyday from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Tel. +66 2518 1000-19, +66 2914 4100-19 Website: www.safariworld.com

The Chao Phraya River and Bangkok's Canals (Klong)

In the nineteenth century, Bangkok's had a complex network of canals that served as the major arteries of transportation. The population drew upon the river not only for transport but also for accommodation and trade, with stilted houses thronging the riverbanks and foreign ships arriving in Bangkok. Hence, Bangkok was once known as "The Venice of the East". The river and canals can still be conveniently explored and offer the visitor a glimpse of that waterborne life of yesteryear.

Express Boat Service

To connect Bangkok with the neighbouring province of Nonthaburi, the express boat service, with fares depending on the colour of the flag on the boat, is provided from the terminal pier near Krung Thep (Bangkok) Bridge. It stops at various piers on both sides of the Chao Phraya River to collect many Bangkokians who take the boat for commuting to and from their places of work.

Major sights to be seen from the river include the Temple of Dawn, the Grand Palace and Thammasat University. The piers for these sights are Tha Chang and Tha Phra Chan. This bustle-free river journey is a welcome difference from the traffic-ridden fumes of the capital, and offers a different and refreshing view of the capital with a fresh river breeze. The express boat



The National Gallery

service operates daily from 6.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Tel. +66 2623 6001-3 Ext. 100, 106

Website: www.chaophrayaexpressboat.com

Klong Bangkok Yai

A part of Chao Phraya River in the past, Klong Bangkok Yai is also called Klong Bang Kha Luang or Klong Bang Luang. Along both sides of this canal are traditional Thai houses that provide visitors with the ambiance of Thailand in the past as this area was a bustling community where people trade by boat since the Thon Buri period. Amongst the tourist attractions along the canal are Wat Hong Rattanam and Wat Intharam.

Klong Mon

Boats leave every thirty minutes, everyday, from 6.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. from the Tha Tian Pier behind Wat Pho. The fare is minimal. This trip is very picturesque, allowing the passenger to get the fascinating insights into the Thai way

of life, including views of canal-side temples, orchards, orchid farms and fascinating insights into the water-borne life of the inhabitants who live along the canal banks.

Klong Bang Khu Wiang and Klong Bang Yai

Ferries leave Tha Chang Pier near the Grand Palace every 20 minutes between 6.15 a.m. and 8.00 p.m. Visitors will enjoy various scenic attractions including canal-side temples, the Royal Barge Boat Shed, Thai-style houses and the early morning Khu Wiang Floating Market which operates between 4.00 a.m. and 7.00 a.m.

GALLERIES

The National Gallery

Located across from the National Museum on Chao Fa Road, this building was once the old Royal Mint and was converted into the

National Gallery in 1974. It displays permanent traditional paintings and contemporary paintings by leading Thai artists. There are regular temporary exhibitions. It opens on Wednesday to Sunday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Tel. +66 2282 2639-40, +66 2282 8525, +66 2282 0637 Website: www.thailandmuseum.com

The Queen Sirikit Arts Exhibition Centre

The gallery, located on Phan Fa intersection, was established in response to the gracious wish of H.M. the Queen to provide a permanent place for the exhibition of a wide range of visual arts - a public gallery deemed an important means for the promotion of Thai culture and Thai artists as well as younger talents with exceptional skill and obvious potential. Gallery hours are from 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. daily (except Wednesday). Tel. +66 2281 5360-1 Website: www.qsncc.com

Silpakorn University

Located beside Sanam Luang is Silpakorn University, the first university of arts in Thailand.



Ratchadamnoen Road

All kinds of art have been passed down from generation to generation, keeping Thailand abreast of changes in modern art.

Professor Silpha Bhirasri (1892 - 1962), an Italian artist serving the Royal Government, committed himself wholeheartedly to developing art education in Thailand. He was the founder of this university.

The University has 4 galleries which display many kinds of traditional and contemporary arts; such as, paintings, sculptures, graphic designs, and architecture. These works are by students and faculty members. In addition, leading Thai and foreign artists also hold their exhibitions here.

Opening hours of the Gallery of Silpakorn University is 9.00 a.m. - 7.00 p.m. from Monday to Friday. Tel. +66 2221 3841 Website: www.artcentre.su.ac.th

Bangkok Art and Culture Centre

Located near the Pathumwan intersection, Bangkok Art and Culture is a contemporary art museum that serves as a gallery where artists meet, share and exchange their passion through fine arts, applied arts, creative design, literature, music, and motion pictures exhibitions. The facilities of the centre include a gallery space, an auditorium, meeting rooms, multi-function hall, art library and outlets. Open on Tuesday - Sunday from 10.00 a.m. - 9.00 p.m. For more information, visit www.bacc.or.th.

INTERESTING ACTIVITIES

Chao Phraya River Dinner Cruises

Riverine Bangkok offers some of the capital's most superb sights, particularly at night when the weather is cooler and reflections from the water bestow upon Bangkok a magical effect



The Grand Palace

of flickering lights and shadows. An ideal way of combining dining with river enchantments is to enjoy a dinner cruise along the Chao Phraya. In addition, many riverside hotels offer their own trips along with useful information on finding suitable cruises. For more information on the Dinner Cruises, visit www.tourismthailand.org.

Heritage Walk

One of the activities that can be done to enjoy the charm of Bangkok is by strolling along the roads that are full of ancient buildings, a reminder of Bangkok in the past. There are several areas with beautiful ancient buildings; such as, Phra Athit Road, Tha Phrachan Road, Ratchadamnoen Road, and Charoen Krung Road. For more information, please visit www.tourismthailand.org.

Touring Rattanakosin Island on a Tram

One of the great ways to observe and explore Rattanakosin Island is by getting on a tram that is equipped with a tour guide who explains all the history and details of each attraction. This 40-minute tour will take you from Sanam Luang, to City Pillar Shrine, Wat Pho, the Grand Palace, Wat Phra Kaeo, the National Museum through to Khao San Road. The tour is available on Monday to Friday at 9.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m. and Saturday to Sunday at 9.00 a.m. - 7.00 p.m.

Explore the Beauty of Bangkok at Night

Bangkok is a city that never sleeps. During the special occasions; such as, H.M. the King's Birthday, or New Year, both sides of several roads; such as, Ratchadamnoen Avenue through to the Grand Palace, is decorated with flickering lights. The Phrachan area is also a great place to enjoy

a view of Bangkok at night time as visitors can be mesmerised by stunning view of Wat Arun.

Muay Thai

With feet, arms, fists and knees used in the fights, the unique martial art of “Muay Thai” has caught on in many countries. Boxers undergoing long periods of specialised training are immensely fit and strong although slight in build. It comes as no surprise when much larger men without the specialised training, feeling that they can easily win, find themselves on their backs in a few seconds when up against these steely-muscled fighters.

“Muay Thai” can be seen throughout the week at three major boxing stadiums, Lumpini (Tel. +66 2282 3141) on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, at Ratchadamnoen (Tel. +66 2281 4205) on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and at the Channel 7 Stadium (Tel. +66 2272 0010) on Saturdays. Programmes generally feature eight bouts and commence around 6.00 p.m. Admission fees are reasonable apart from ringside seats that are more expensive.

“Muay Thai Live - The Legend Lives”, learn about the origins of Thai boxing and see exciting displays in nightly shows that will take place at Asiatique The Riverfront on Charoenkrung Road. Through a combination of fascinating history and amazing athleticism, explores the roots of Thailand’s ancient martial art and brings to life over 300 years of history. For more information please visit www.muaythailive.net (Tel. +66 2108 5999)

Meditation

Meditation is one of the most popular aspects of Buddhism, practised by numerous Thais and laymen as a means of inspiring inner peace and well-being. The World Fellowship of Buddhists

(WFB) located on Sukhumvit Road between Soi 22 and 24 is the most convenient and useful place to learn about Thai Buddhism and meditation practised in certain Bangkok temples.

Entertainment

Thai and international cultural performances including symphonies, ballet, mime, modern dramas, jazz and pop concerts from world-famous artists are often staged in Bangkok. Details of current events are regularly advertised in Bangkok’s major English-language newspaper or www.thaiticketmajor.com or www.tourismthailand.org.

Traditional Thai Massage

This therapeutic and highly soothing form of massage purportedly evolved from Brahmin hermit ascetics some 2,500 years ago, who relieved the stress of extended periods of meditation by adopting certain postures. Today, those practised in the art can bring great relief, reduce muscle stress and bring a sense of well-being to the body. The best-known school of Thai traditional massage is located in Wat Pho (Tel. +66 2221 3551, +66 2221 3686), or www.watpomassage.com where a two-week course is taught for anyone interested in mastering this unique and fascinating art. Major hotels and spas in Bangkok also provide Thai massage services.

Thai Cooking

Thai cuisine is rapidly increasing in popularity worldwide and there is an increasing interest in learning the art. There are several places offering Thai cooking lesson, please visit www.tourismthailand.org for more information.

Golfing Opportunities around Bangkok and Samut Prakan

Over the last two decades, there has been an explosion in golf course building, as more land has become available for exploitation. Today, Bangkok and Samut Prakan boast many modern, professionally run courses, many of them designed by famous golfing names from Europe and America.

Golfing in Thailand is a golfer’s dream. The courses are well-designed, very cheap compared to their Western counterparts, and caddies are always available. During the week, they are far less crowded than courses in other countries. Most courses allow the casual visitors to play, whether they are members or not. Please visit www.tourismthailand.org for more information.

ACCOMMODATION

There is a wide range of accommodations offering all around Bangkok, ranging from 5-star hotels, riverside hotels, hotels in the middle of shopping area, to backpacker’s hostel. For more information, please visit www.tourismthailand.org.

SHOPPING

Smart people arrive in Bangkok with empty suitcases and go back with full ones. The reason is that Bangkok is one of the world’s best shopping centres. It has many advantages: quality, cheap prices, skilled artisans and friendly good-natured bargaining.

Favourite purchases include Thai silks and cottons, modern and traditional jewellery featuring precious gemstones; such as,



sapphires, rubies, emeralds and diamonds, semi-precious stones including opal, jade, topaz, turquoise and zircon, nielloware, silverware, pewterware, ceramics, specially-fired celadon, woodcarved paintings, custom-tailored clothing and hundreds of other special buys.

There is also the selection of authentic Thai handicrafts and contemporary crafts and housewares from "One Tambon One Product (OTOP)", a project to promote quality cottage industry goods and folk handicrafts in Thailand. Shopping in Thailand is divided into two types and several areas. Visitors can buy at street stalls and pick up clothing at very cheap prices, (but with no guarantees) or they can buy in plazas, shopping centres and hypermarkets where prices are fixed. Surprisingly, street shopping; such as, at the Chatuchak Weekend Market often gives good value and quality and the prices are relatively low, although bargaining is expected and carried out with humour and with a smile. Supermarkets, plazas and hypermarkets offer good value too. Service is excellent and the establishment often contains cinema complexes and other entertainment areas, including excellent eating out facilities.

Phatphong/Suriwong/Silom Areas

Silom Road is the main artery of Bangkok's commercial heart and paralleled by Suriwong Road, while Phatphong runs crosswise between the two. At night, this area has a lot of vivid entertainment. In addition to housing dozens of specialist shops and boutiques representing all the major products, this area also boasts many branches of well-known retailers and several shopping plazas. Street stalls also abound, most notably at Phatphong's famous night bazaar. This area comprises Bangkok's major business

and entertainment areas as well. A variety of shops, supermarkets and plazas spoil the shopper by offering jewellery, gemstones, antiques, ceramics, leather goods, clothing, handicrafts, Thai silks and cottons, electronic devices, cameras and computer gears, as well as a variety of other goods.

Mahasak/Silom/Charoenkrung Road Areas

This area contains a major gemstone-dealing and jewellery manufacturing area. The area houses boutiques, art galleries, department stores and plazas, including the River City Complex where a wide selection of goods can be found everywhere with an emphasis on antiques, tailored clothing and contemporary Thai and Asian paintings.

Yaowarat

Yaowarat is what the Thais call Chinatown and a purely Chinese community has lived here for many years. The inhabitants, of course, consider themselves Thai now and many can no longer speak Chinese, but a look at their faces will tell their origins. It is an interesting place to explore. Two of Chinatown's symbolic roads are Yaowarat Road leading westwards from near Wat Traimit, and Sampheng Lane, which runs parallel with Yaowarat to the south. Busy Yaowarat Road is Chinatown's main street, and has surely one of the greatest concentrations of gold shops anywhere. There are dozens of shops, all in red and gold, most with competitive prices. Thais buy it not only for decorative purposes but also as savings for a rainy day, because gold shops will gladly buy back gold at the daily rate, for a small charge. This area is also famous for fine Chinese food, where you can get bird's nest soup, dim sum, and other traditional Chinese delicacies. Shops also



Yaowarat



Pahurat Bombay Market

offer selections of Chinese herbs for sale. The narrow, crammed Sampheng Lane is a very busy predominantly pedestrian street. It is a hive of constant commercial activities, mostly in textiles and cloth, and a fascinating street to walk along.

Phahurat Bombay Market

There is a large Indian ethnicity in Thailand. Merchants have spread out all over Asia from Southern India and many have come to Thailand. Many have arrived to trade the brightly-coloured cloth used to make saris and the beautiful ankle-length dresses Indian women like to wear. In Phahurat Market, on Phahurat Road parallel to Yaowarat Road just west of Chinatown and towards the river, visitors will find a variety of supplies to suit the clothing needs of those Indian ladies and more. The market sells all kinds of cloth from plain white cotton to batik to silk, to cover every need; for cushions, curtains, upholstery coverings, suits, dresses and skirts. Think of the cloth requirements or even the buttons and tassels

one needs, and it is a good bet one will find what one wants here. Cloth is sold by the metre, straight from the bolt. It is usually very cheap.

Phahurat is a market really worth exploring. Not only is it a cloth centre, but also a spice centre. As visitors go round the market, they will be aware of that spicy, Indian smell made up of incense, which they can buy here, and of course Indian curry. Visitors can buy incense to lend their living room an exotic atmosphere; search the tiny side streets for spices and other Indian specialties, household goods and shoulder bags in Thai silk.

Sukhumvit Area

This long thoroughfare is Bangkok's major artery. The major shopping areas are concentrated between Soi Nana (Sukhumvit 3) and Sukhumvit 24 and there is a thriving street market. A variety of shops, shopping centres, plazas, department stores, hotels, serviced apartment, restaurants, and nightclubs that lined up in this area makes Sukhumvit to be one of the most popular and bustling

areas in Bangkok. Japanese Town, which dotted around the area on Sukhumvit 24, Sukhumvit 33, and Sukhumvit 55, as well as Korean Town on Sukhumvit 12, provide visitors with authentic Japanese and Korean food.

Phloen Chit/Pathumwan Areas

Also known as Ratchaprasong area, this is the main shopping area and business district of Bangkok. Situated at the heart of Bangkok, visitors will find several department stores, shopping centres, hotels, and restaurants, as well as the famous Hindu deity shrines.

Pratunam/Phetchaburi Road Areas

Pratunam area is best known for inexpensive ready-made clothing, which is sold partly in a street market where bargaining is the order of the day. Wholesalers usually come to this area to buy the fashionable clothes to sell at their own stores, but shoppers can also enjoy shopping for wholesaler's price if buying in bulk.

A few hundred metres west of Pratunam area, along the Phetchaburi Road, is where visitors can find computer goods, hardware, software and other electronic goods for incredibly good value. Shoppers can enjoy browsing through the variety of electrical products and can get a tailor-made computer that is assembled on the spot, as well as have their computer repaired.

Banglamphu

Near the river exists this lively market and commercial area favoured by locals for its good bargains; however, over the last twenty years, it has become famous for Khao San Road, where backpackers and budget travellers have found a home away from home. The road has gone more upscale in recent years.

Although the street is not very long, Khao San Road is extremely interesting with people



Pak Khlong Talat

from all over the world examining the market stalls, looking for accommodation, eating in restaurants and using cyber cafes. This is where you can buy second-hand books and clothing, reserve a really inexpensive hotel or guesthouse, or just sit in an open-air restaurant watching people go by and guessing where they come from. In the evenings, loud music takes over and during the Songkran water festival, visitors will not escape a soaking experience. It is a good humoured friendly place and well worth visiting. Website: www.khaosanroad.com

Bo Be Market

This well-known clothing market opens at 10.00 a.m. and is situated along Krung Kasem Road, near Saphan Khao and the Department

of Technical and Economic Cooperation on the intersection with Lan Luang Road. It is largely wholesale; therefore, bargaining is necessary if one is preparing to buy large quantities.

Pak Khlong Talat

This market is at the base of Phra Phuttha Yodfa Bridge along Chakrawat Road. Also known as the "flower market", most people come to buy flowers from lilies, carnations, roses, daisies to orchids, and so on. Vendors can arrange beautiful bouquets for every occasion. The best time to visit is early morning, as the fresh flowers are transported here from the nearby provinces.

Chatuchak Weekend Market

Located near the Bangkok Bus Terminal (Mo Chit II), this enormous weekend market, hugely popular with local and foreign shoppers is open every weekend from dawn to dusk approximately 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Chatuchak Weekend Market is a Bangkok landmark where visitors can buy just about everything from all over Thailand, ranging from clothing to pets and everything in between - a paradise for browsers and bargain-hunters. It is also where professional and amateur art-lovers and artists meet. On Wednesday and Thursday, visitors can enjoy exploring and buying numerous types of plant and flowers at Chatuchak Flower and Plant Market, which is situated within the same area as the weekend market.

Thewet Market

Reachable by the river taxi, as well as road transport, this market is best known for potted plants and shrubs, especially orchids. On the other side of the street is the fresh market where visitors can enjoy shopping fresh fish, vegetables, fruits, as well as delicious food. The best time to visit this market is from late morning to early afternoon.



Chatuchak Weekend Market

Lang Krasuang Market

Between behind the Ministry of Interior, a row of shop-houses sell moderately priced second-hand goods, like antique cameras, typewriters, musical instruments, radios and all manner of electrical goods. Bargaining is recommended.

Woeng Nakhon Kasem

Better known as the "Thieves Market", located between Yaowarat Road and Charoenkrung Road, this area sells antiques including Thai and Chinese objets d'art, porcelain, brassware, copperware and furniture inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Bargaining is essential.

NIGHTLIFE

At night, when most of the city's attractions are closed and visitors feel like the day has not yet been completed, feel free to spend the night time in various exquisite pubs, clubs, karaoke, and bars in Bangkok. Sukhumvit, Silom, Thong Lo, Ekkamai, Khao San, Ratchadaphisek Roads, and Asiatique the Riverfront are the areas where you can find lively clubs and bars that



BTS Skytrain

features everything from live band, jazz music to hip-hop.

TRANSPORTATIONS

Train

The main station is Hua Lamphong. This beautiful 100-year-old building is designed in the shape of an arc. The Italian architect who designed the station was also responsible for the marble Ananda Samakhom Throne Hall. Hua Lamphong serves as a hub for different rail networks that link Bangkok to other provinces in Thailand. For information, please contact the Travel Service Unit, State Railways of Thailand. Tel. +66 2220 0175, 1690 Website: www.railway.co.th

Bus

There are two main types of buses in Bangkok, an air-conditioned bus, and non air-conditioned bus. Air-conditioned buses and minibuses are only a fraction more expensive than the regular non-air conditioned buses. The bus regularly runs from 5.00 a.m. – 11.00 p.m. A bus route map is available at most hotels, bookshops and the Tourism Authority of Thailand's office on Phetchaburi Road, or visit www.bmta.co.th. For more information, please call 1184.

Subway

The city's subway system (MRTA) connects many of the top tourist attractions with accommodation areas, markets, and the business district. The trains run from 6 a.m. to midnight, daily. For more information, please visit www.bangkokmetro.co.th.

BTS Skytrain

Bangkok Mass Transit System (BTS) provides safe, inexpensive and rapid rides to popular areas of Bangkok. The service is excellent and the stations and trains are immaculately clean. There are two lines, intersecting at Siam Square. It is the best way to avoid traffic and pollution. The trains run from 6 a.m. to midnight, daily. For more information, please visit www.bts.co.th. Tel: +66 2617 6000

Airport Rail Link

Airport Rail Link transports travellers and commuters from central Bangkok to Suvarnabhumi Airport. There are two routes of service; one being the "Express Line", taking travellers from the Bangkok City Air Terminal, which is the Makkasan Station to the Suvarnabhumi Station in 15 minutes and run from 6.00 a.m. – 12.00 a.m. everyday. The other service provided is the

"City Line", which offers to take travellers from Phayathai Station to Suvarnabhumi Station, and stops at 6 stations along the way. This route also operates from 6.00 a.m. – 12.00 a.m. everyday. For more information, visit www.airportrailink.railway.co.th.

Taxis

Hotel taxis have set rates. Street taxis known as "Taxi Meters" charge a minimum of 35 baht for the first 2 kilometres and 5 baht for every following kilometre. Tel. 1661, 1681

River Taxis

Even more unusual, though equally convenient, river taxis ply the Chao Phraya River. While some are just cross river ferries, others serve many piers on both banks and cover a route that goes up as far as the northern suburb of Nonthaburi. www.chaophrayaboat.co.th

Tuk-Tuk

These 3-wheelers are popular for short journeys. Fares must be bargained in advance. They are not much cheaper than taxis and perhaps the odd mode of transportation is the attraction.

Motorcycle Taxis

Bangkok is such a busy city with many traffic jams that everyone wants to get to their destination on time and as fast as they could which is why motorcycle taxis are so popular. The fare depends on the distance but is about the same as a taxi.

MAJOR EVENTS

Besides nationally celebrated events on public holidays, including Buddhist holy days, Bangkok hosts a number of important annual events as

followed:

Thailand Chinese New Year Festival Chinese New Year (January or February) Chinatown on Yaowarat Road

Come to celebrate the Chinese New Year at the biggest Chinatown in Thailand, Yaowarat Road renowned as the Golden Road, the Land of the Siamese Dragon. Watch the beauty, treasure the Chinese cultural demonstrations and experience a wide range of Chinese cuisine available at famous restaurants as well as fashion shows depicting ancient Chinese attire from various regions. The goldsmith shops offer you beautiful souvenirs. Last but not least, Chinese movies are sure to fascinate you. Website: www.tourismthailand.org

Bangkok Songkran Festival

13-15 April

Ratchadamnoen Avenue, Khao San Road, Phra Athit Road, Bang Lamphu, Santi Chai Prakan Park, Sanam Luang, and temples in Rattanakosin Royal Square

Songkran embodies traditional Thai cultural values. The underlying significance of Songkran is the process of cleansing and purification starting the New Year afresh with all that is good and pure.

Website: www.songkran.net, www.tourismthailand.org

Royal Ploughing Ceremony

Beginning of May

Sanam Luang

Staged every year at Sanam Luang, and presided over by H.M. the King, this Brahmin ritual marks the official commencement of the rice-growing season around the beginning of May.

Amazing Thailand Grand Sale

June – August

Department stores, hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions nationwide

If your hobby is shopping, you have to visit the country from June to August. During the sale, we have goods from all over the world from renowned brand names of clothing and accessories to new collections of Thai handicrafts for home decorations. Products made of Thai silk will also be on sale. Moreover, the beautiful folk-designed and hand-woven fabrics can fill your heart with joy. Sports equipment, sportswear and electrical appliances are reasonably priced, too. To make your stay more convenient, different services are meticulously arranged to ensure luxurious convenience while you do your shopping here. We have a wide selection of hotels, serviced apartments, restaurants of various cuisine, theme parks, and travel agencies, to name just a few.
Website: www.tourismthailand.org

H.M. the Queen's Birthday Celebrations

12 August

Nationwide

An alms-giving ceremony in the morning is followed by a huge festival of music and culture at Sanam Luang in Bangkok to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's birthday. You can also appreciate the beauty of the decorations along Ratchadamnoen Avenue.
Website: www.tourismthailand.org

Chulalongkorn Day

23 October

The Equestrian Statue of King Rama V the Great

Celebrated every 23rd October around the

equestrian statue of King Chulalongkorn (1860 - 1910), this ceremony honours the King who abolished slavery, saved the country from colonisation, and modernised the country.

Website: www.tourismthailand.org

Loi Krathong Festival

**Full moon night of the 12th Lunar month
Chao Phraya River**

View the illuminated boat procession, Loi Krathong activities as well as illuminated buildings and historical sites on both sides of the Chao Phraya River.

Website: www.loikrathong.net, www.tourismthailand.org

Bangkok Marathon

November

Sanam Chai Road (by the Grand Palace)

The starting point is at Sanam Chai, in front of the Royal Palace, passing many fascinating tourist attractions. The race is divided into 4 categories with divisions for different age groups; 42.185 kilometre-marathon, 21.10 kilometre-half-marathon and 10.55 kilometre-mini-marathon, and 5 kilometre-micro-marathon.

Website: www.bkkmarathon.com, www.tourismthailand.org

H.M. the King's Birthday

5 December

Nationwide

This event is to celebrate the auspicious occasion of our beloved King's birthday. An alms-giving ceremony in the morning is followed by a huge festival of music and culture at Sanam Luang in Bangkok to celebrate



Bangkok Songkran Festival

His Majesty the King's birthday. You can also appreciate the beauty of the decorations along Ratchadamnoen Avenue.

Website: www.tourismthailand.org

Trooping of the Colours

Beginning of December

Royal Plaza

The elite Royal Guards swear their allegiance to their monarch in a colourful ceremony in the Royal Plaza.

Bangkok's Countdown

31 December - 1 January

All around the Bangkok area

End the year and start a great new year with traditional Thai activities by making New Year wishes at 9 auspicious places.

Website: www.tourismthailand.org



The Erawan Museum



Phra Samut Chedi

SAMUT PRAKAN

Also known as Pak Nam, this province, located at the mouth of the Chao Phraya River only 25 kilometres south of Bangkok, can easily be reached by bus or taxi. Visitors, for example, can take a No. 511 air-conditioned bus (Pinklao-Pak Nam) which passes along Ratchadamnoen Avenue and Phetchaburi Road during the earlier stage of the journey.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

The Royal Naval Museum

Opposite the Naval Academy, 10 kilometres from Bang Na intersection on Sukhumvit Road, the museum, open everyday between 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m., displays models of the Royal Barge procession, as well as equipment and utensils used on warships. Tel. +66 2394 1997 Website: www.navy.mi.th/navalmuseum

Phra Samut Chedi

Opposite the City Hall, this remarkable white



The Ancient City

pagoda, commonly called “Phra Chedi Klang Nam” (which means, Chedi in the middle of water) as its original location was on an island near the river mouth, attracts visitors who enjoy the pagoda’s annual celebration, usually lasting nine days in October.

The Ancient City

Essentially an open-air museum, this very large



Bang Pu Seaside

complex, located at Km. 33 on Sukhumvit Highway and open everyday from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., contains almost-real-scale replicas of religious complexes, monuments and buildings found throughout Thailand. Tel. +66 2709 1644-5, +66 2323 9253 Website: www.ancientcity.com

The Erawan Museum

Located on Sukhumvit Road (old route) passing Bang Phli Intersection prior to the Pak Nam Intersection, the museum is intended to collect the antiques and cultural heritage of various kinds and to pass on and preserve Thai arts for the future. The Erawan or three-headed elephant is the first free-standing sculpture of the world to be constructed with a manual direct metal technique. Open everyday from 8.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. (The last Guided Tour is at 5.00 p.m.) Tel. +66 2371 3135-6 Website: www.erawan-museum.com

Bueng Tako

Also known as Club Tako, this is a place for people who love water sports; such as, water-skiing and windsurfing from 12.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. on weekdays and 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. at weekends. Tel. +66 2316 7809-10

Bang Pu Seaside

About 10 kilometres from the town on Sukhumvit Road, a pier stretches out over a tidal muddy beach and affords a long walkway for those visitors who enjoy a pleasant seaside atmosphere every evening in the cool season, watching marine bird life and dining at a seafood restaurant nearby.

Samut Prakan Crocodile Farm

Located in the vicinity of Tambon Thai Ban, the complex of more than 60,000 freshwater and marine crocodiles and a mini-zoo also offers an exciting show of keepers playing with these



Phra Pradaeng Songkran Festival

dangerous animals. The farm opens everyday from 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. Tel. +66 2703 4891-5, +66 2703 5144-8

Bang Namphueng Floating Market

Located in Amphoe Phra Pradaeng, this floating market is a Thai-Mon community where visitors can enjoy numerous choices of local food and desserts that are sold on the long tail boats. The most famous fruit of Bang Namphueng is Nam Dok Mai mango. Nam Dok Mai is a variety of mango that offers aromatic

scents and sweet flavour. Visitors can also enjoy getting on a boat trip to observe the scenery of the canal-based way of life, or you can even try rowing your own boat. The market is open every weekend from 7 a.m. onwards until afternoon.

MAJOR EVENTS

Phra Pradaeng Songkran Festival A few days after Songkran Day (13th April) Amphoe Phra Pradaeng

The Phra Pradaeng Songkran Festival, formerly

known as the 'Pak Lat Songkran Festival', with the notable addition of a colourful and elaborate Songkran procession staged by the Mon, or Raman, residents of Phra Pradaeng. You will enjoy the Songkran procession of decorate floats and a procession of birds and fish. View the exotic game of "Saba" played by the Mon descendants. Also check out the Beauty Queen and King Pageant.

Website: www.songkran.net, www.tourismthailand.org

Yon Bua Festival

Held by Bang Phli residents, this "Yon Bua" or "Tossing the Lotus" festival is a long merit-making tradition on the 14th day of the waxing moon of the 11th month (around October). Large crowds of people wait to toss lotuses onto a boat bearing a Buddha image, sometimes covered with a floral tribute almost up to the statue's head.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Car

You can take the old Sukhumvit Road and also Highway No. 303 to get there. The distance is only 29 kilometres from Bangkok to Samut Prakan town.

By Bus

By air-conditioned buses (of the BMTA Bangkok Mass Transit Authority) Line No. 2 (Sam Rong - Pak Khlong Talat), Line No. 6 (Pak Kret - Phra Pradaeng), Line No. 7 (Sam Rong - Tha Phra), Line No. 8 (Pak Nam - Tha Ratchaworadit), Line No. 11 (Pak Nam - Khon Song Sai Tai), Line No. 13 (Rangsit - Pu Chao Saming Phrai), Line No. 23 (Sam Rong - Thewet via Express way), Line No. 25 (Pak Nam - Tha Chang), Line No. 102 (Pak Nam - Chong Nonsi), Line No.



Yon Bua Festival

126 (Nonthaburi - Sam Rong), Line No. 129 (Express way - Kasetsart University - Sam Rong), Line No. 142 (Wat Lau - Samut Prakan), Line No. 145 (Suan Chatuchak - Samut Prakan)

By non-air conditioned buses Line No. 2 (Sam Rong - Pak Khlong Talat), Line No. 6 (Phra Pradaeng - Bang Lamphu), Line No. 13

(Rangsit - Phu Chao Saming Phrai), Line No. 20 (Pom Phra Chun- Tha Nam Din Daeng), Line No. 23 (Sam Rong - Thewet via Express way), Line No. 25 (Pak Nam - Tha Chang), Line No. 45 (Sam Rong - Ratchaprasong), Line No. 82 (Phra Pradaeng - Bang Lamphu), Line No. 102 (Pak Nam - Chong Nonsi), Line No. 116

(Samrong - Sathon), Line No. 129 (Kasetsart University - Sam Rong via Express way), Line No. 138 (Chatuchak - Phra Pradaeng via Express way), Line No. 145 (Suan Chatuchak - Pak Nam)