



Thailand is fast becoming Britain's most popular Asian holiday destination and it's not surprising when you consider how much there is to see and do in this diverse country.

With 1650 miles of coastline boasting stunning palm fringed beaches, lapped by warm clear blue water you can totally relax or even indulge in a Thai massage on the beach; pamper yourself at a top spa or play a relaxing game of golf.

For the more active, Thailand offers every adventure activity there is: hilltribe treks and elephant treks, bamboo rafting and watersports, mountain biking and rock climbing, diving and snorkelling.

Thailand is also rich in culture and history: packed with ancient temples, traditional architecture and mystical ruins; with colourful festivals and dances held throughout the year. To top it off the food is delicious and the Thai people are renowned for their friendliness and hospitality to strangers. Thailand is easily accessible, offers unbeatable value for money and really is a destination that offers something for everyone.



# THAILAND

## GATEWAY TO THE EAST



**WHEN TO GO** Thailand has a tropical climate with high temperatures year-round. Expect tropical rain generally between June and October, although in Koh Samui the monsoon season is November–December when there can be rain, high seas and wind. The best overall time for visiting most of Thailand is between November and February - during these months it rains least and is not too hot. The north is always several degrees cooler.

**WHERE TO GO** Whether you're looking for adventure, sightseeing, shopping, great nightlife or just total relaxation, Thailand has it all! There's bustling Bangkok, with its mix of ancient and modern, plus great shopping and sightseeing, there's Northern Thailand, known for its picturesque scenery, exotic hill tribes and temples, and then there's the infamous numerous white sandy tropical beaches and islands further south, each with its own unique charm.

### ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

**VISA** EU passport holders can stay in Thailand for up to 30 days without a visa providing your passport has a minimum of 6 months validity beyond your departure date. For further information contact the Royal Thai Embassy on 020 7589 2944.

**CURRENCY** The local currency is the Thai Baht. Travellers cheques are widely accepted and you will get a better rate when exchanging them than you would for cash. US dollars are the most readily acceptable currency. Credit cards are becoming increasingly acceptable in quality shops, hotels and restaurants.

**HEALTH** Recommended vaccinations are typhoid, hepatitis A, tetanus and polio. If you are planning on visiting remote parts of the country then it is advisable to also take precautions against malaria. Contact your GP for more information.

**TRAVELLING TIME** Bangkok is approximately 12 hours by non-stop flight from the UK.

**LOCAL TIME** GMT + 7 hours.

**FURTHER INFORMATION** Contact the Tourism Authority of Thailand on 0870 900 2007 or visit their website [www.tourismthailand.co.uk](http://www.tourismthailand.co.uk)

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT** Thai food is internationally renowned for being spicy and pungent. Some of the most popular dishes are Phat Thai (Thai fried noodles), Tom Yam Kung (spicy shrimp soup) and the green & red curries, and of course rice is eaten with most meals. Along the coast the seafood is delicious and you will also find an incredible variety of fresh fruit available.

**SHOPPING** Thailand is a shopper's paradise, offering a diverse range of products from traditional handicrafts and tribal artefacts to gems and jewellery, antiques to tailored suits and designer clothing, and, of course, silk. Most tourist resorts boast at least one street market. For shoppers who enjoy rummaging in an atmosphere of controlled chaos, Bangkok's sprawling Chatuchak Weekend Market boasts thousands of stalls selling everything from snakes to sarongs, singing doves to antiques and camping gear!