

THAILANDFORAMERICANS.COM

2026 EDITION • WRITTEN & CHECKED FOR US TRAVELERS

Thailand in 7 Days

THE FIRST-TIMER ITINERARY

Bangkok's temples and street food, then the southern islands — the classic first week, planned block by block for Americans.

THE SHAPE OF THE TRIP • 7 DAYS

BANGKOK → SOUTHERN ISLANDS → BANGKOK & HOME

DAYS 1–3 • BKK

DAYS 4–6 • HKT / KBV

DAY 7 • BKK



AT A GLANCE

One capital, one coast, one long flight

Visa-exempt

US TOURISTS · CONFIRM
CURRENT TERMS

TDAC

MANDATORY · FREE · OFFICIAL
SITE ONLY

Nov–Feb

THE COOL, DRY SWEET SPOT

No nonstops

FROM THE US — YOU WILL
CONNECT

How to use this guide. Each block of the trip gets a page, plus the one thing worth knowing — and a link to the full, kept-current guide online. Print it, or keep it on your phone offline.

BEFORE YOU GO

Six things to sort this week

Entry

A complete checklist of Thailand's entry requirements for U.S. travelers — passport rules, visa exemption, the mandatory TDAC, proof of funds and onward travel, and health rules.

thailandforamericans.com/article/thailand-entry-requirements-americans

Money

A practical guide to handling money in Thailand — when to use cash vs. cards, ATM fees, currency exchange, and tipping customs for American travelers.

thailandforamericans.com/article/money-in-thailand-guide

Temples & manners

The cultural etiquette every American should know before visiting Thailand — from respecting the monarchy and temple customs to the wai greeting, feet, heads, and saving face.

thailandforamericans.com/article/thai-etiquette-for-americans

Arrival card

A step-by-step guide to Thailand's mandatory Digital Arrival Card (TDAC) — what it is, when and how to complete it on the official free site, and the common mistakes to avoid.

thailandforamericans.com/article/thailand-digital-arrival-card-tdac

Getting around

How to navigate Bangkok like a local — the BTS Skytrain and MRT metro, river boats, Grab, taxis, and tuk-tuks — and how to beat the city's notorious traffic.

thailandforamericans.com/article/getting-around-bangkok

Staying safe

The most common tourist scams in Thailand — the tuk-tuk gem detour, taxi tricks, jet-ski damage claims, and more — and exactly how to avoid each one.

thailandforamericans.com/article/common-scams-thailand

Bangkok

Most flights from the U.S. route through East Asia or the Middle East and land at Suvarnabhumi (BKK) in the late evening or early morning, so treat Day 1 as an arrival day. Get to your hotel, grab a first bowl of noodles, and sleep off the jet lag — you're roughly 11–12 hours ahead of the East Coast, and fighting it never works.

WORTH KNOWING

Treat Day 1 as an arrival day, not a sightseeing day — flights from the US connect through Asia or the Middle East and land late. Basing on the Skytrain (Sukhumvit) makes the rest of the block easy.

THE FULL GUIDE, KEPT CURRENT

thailandforamericans.com/article/bangkok-first-timer-guide

the southern islands

On the morning of Day 4, catch a short domestic flight south. Phuket (HKT) and Krabi (KBV) are both about 1.5 hours from Bangkok and serve as gateways to the Andaman coast's headline scenery; carriers like Thai AirAsia, Nok Air, and Bangkok Airways run the routes frequently and cheaply. Krabi is the better pick if you want dramatic limestone cliffs and a slightly mellower scene; Phuket if you want more nightlife, resorts, and direct boat connections.

WORTH KNOWING

The hop south is a 1.5-hour domestic flight, not a drive — book it ahead. Which airport you pick (HKT or KBV) decides which coast and which islands are in reach.

THE FULL GUIDE, KEPT CURRENT

thailandforamericans.com/article/bangkok-to-islands-transport

Bangkok and home

Most long-haul flights back to the U.S. leave Bangkok late at night, which hands you a bonus final day. Knock out any last shopping — a mall like ICONSIAM or one more market — grab a final plate of mango sticky rice, and head to the airport. If your flight is in the morning instead, spend the night before near Suvarnabhumi to keep the airport run short.

WORTH KNOWING

Long-haul flights home leave Bangkok late at night, which hands you a full bonus day — plan one last thing rather than sitting at the airport.

THE FULL GUIDE, KEPT CURRENT

thailandforamericans.com/article/best-markets-bangkok

WHAT IT COSTS

A day in Thailand, three ways

Thailand is a strong-value trip for Americans. These are per-person daily ballparks, excluding international flights — the same figures we keep updated on the site.

BUDGET

\$25–45

PER DAY

\$175–315

FOR THE TRIP

Hostels, street food, buses & trains.

COMFORTABLE

\$80–150

PER DAY

\$560–1,050

FOR THE TRIP

Nice hotels, mixed dining, domestic flights, some tours.

LUXURY

\$250+

PER DAY

\$1,750+

FOR THE TRIP

Resorts, private villas, fine dining, private guides.

Trip totals are the daily range × 7 nights, per person. The international flight is your largest and most variable cost and sits on top of these. Rates move — check the current figures on the site before you book.

The booking checklist

- ✓ Passport valid 6+ months past your return date
- ✓ TDAC completed on the official government portal (free)
- ✓ International flight booked early — no nonstops from the US
- ✓ Domestic flight south (BKK→HKT or KBV) booked ahead
- ✓ Current visa-exemption terms confirmed for your travel date
- ✓ Bank notified of travel dates, and a second card packed separately

And the fees that quietly add up

ATM FEE ฿220

Thai ATMs charge foreign cards about ฿220 per withdrawal, on top of your own bank's fee. Take out larger amounts less often.

ALWAYS CHOOSE BAHT

When a machine offers to charge you in dollars, decline — that's dynamic currency conversion, and the rate is always worse.

TIP MODESTLY

Round up taxis, leave 20–50 baht at restaurants — but check first for a 10% service charge, common at upscale places.

KEEP PLANNING

The trip continues online

Every chapter links to the full, regularly-updated guide on thailandforamericans.com — links checked at publish time.

Where to stay in Bangkok

thailandforamericans.com/article/where-to-stay-in-bangkok

What to eat in Thailand

thailandforamericans.com/article/thai-street-food-guide

The best time to visit

thailandforamericans.com/article/best-time-to-visit-thailand

Bangkok or the north?

thailandforamericans.com/article/trekking-northern-thailand