



ASIAN TIGERS

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MOBILITY

Settling-in Thailand



What's Inside?

The Basics



Let's Talk About Culture



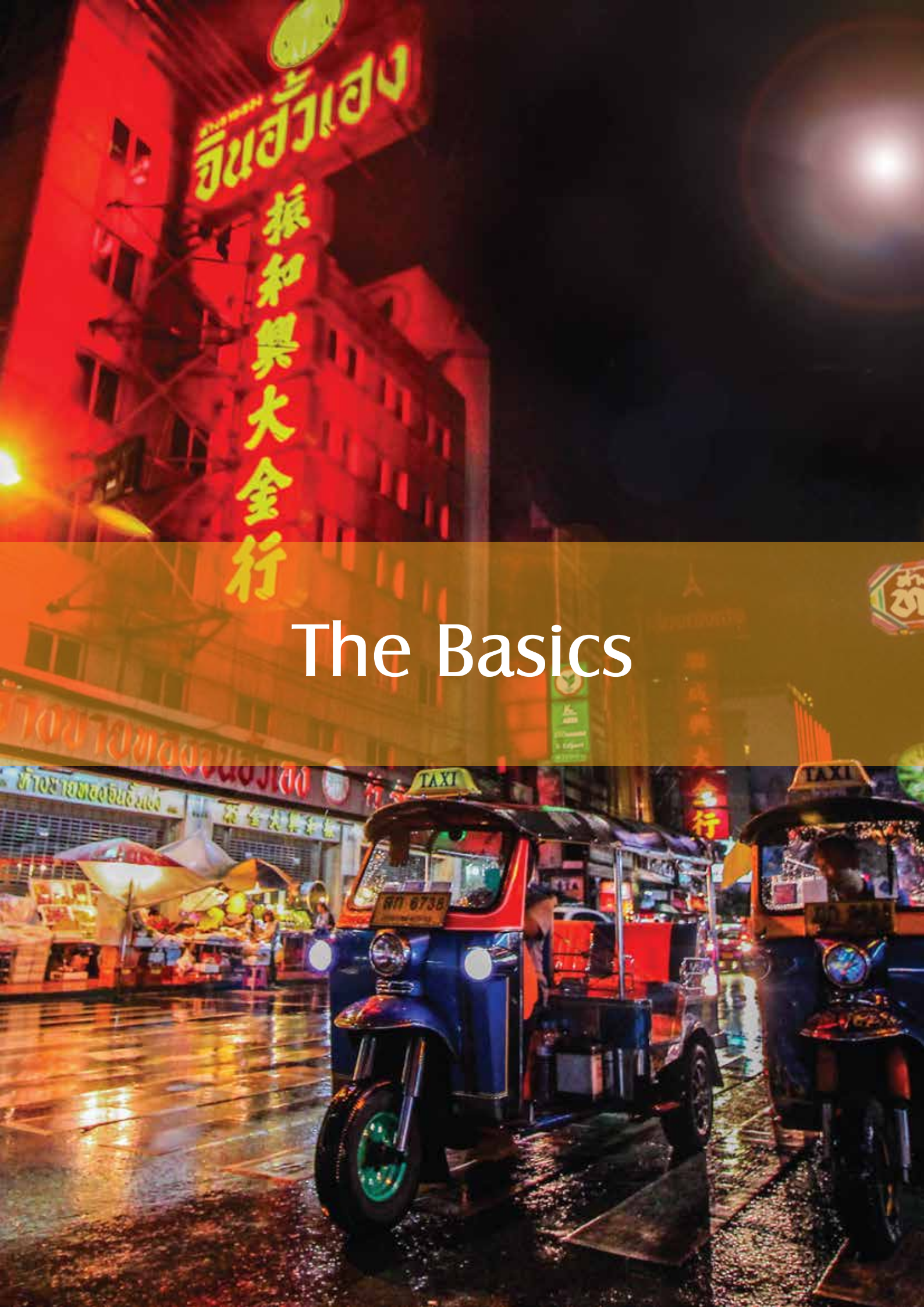
Settling in Tips



Let's Have Fun



Need Help?



The Basics

About Bangkok

Thailand, which is the “Land of the Free”, is a land of diverse beauty with hundreds of miles of coastline, forested mountains, and warm tropical weather. Peaceful, hospitable, and broad-minded are the best description of the Thais. They enjoy life and love smiling. Buddhism bring significant effect on Thai culture while there are other religions like Hinduism and Animism.

Thailand is a developing country. Goods like Thai rice, textiles and footwear, fishery products, rubber, jewelry, cars, computers, and electrical appliances are exported to the world. Thailand economy relies heavily on export, with more than two-thirds of GDP comes from exports. Thailand is the world's no.1 exporter of rice and considered as a newly industrialized country. Substantial industries include electric components, computer parts, cars, and tourism.

In 1782, Bangkok was established as the capital of Thailand, and is known in Thai as Krung Thep, which means “City of Angels”. The full name of Bangkok is actually Krungthepmahanakhon Amonrattanakosin Mahintharayutthaya Mahadilokphop Noppharattratthathaniburirom Udomratchaniwetmahasathan Amonphimanawatansathit Sakkathattiyawitsanukamprasit, which means "The city of angels, the great city, the residence of the Emerald Buddha, the impregnable city of God Indra, the grand capital of the world endowed with nine precious gems, the happy city, abounding in an enormous Royal Palace that resembles the heavenly abode where reigns the reincarnated god, a city given by Indra and built by Vishnukarn."

Bangkok is a city of dramatic contrasts. It is not hard to see traditional lifestyle nowadays even if the city itself has transformed into a modern, cosmopolitan metropolis. Although Bangkok is a fast-paced city now, the Bangkokians' smile never fades away. They are still friendly as past.

Bangkok's Facts & Figures

With a population of about 10 million, Bangkok is a balance of traditions and impulses of cosmopolitan life.

Bangkok is a multi-faceted, multi-cultural city and a key part of South East Asia's booming economy. Visitors may remember Bangkok for its temples or the magnificence of the King's Grand Palace. For certain others, Bangkok is connected to the exciting nightlife with an extensive choice of entertainment options set against age-old markets. At the same time, many visitors perceive Bangkok as a shopping paradise or a fast-emerging Asian capital.

Bangkok is all of the above and more. It is a place full of creativity and fun with a keen eye on the future. In spite of rapid advancements, the Thais never lose sight of their roots: numerous temples maintain a serene atmosphere with only chants of monks in the background; on the Chao Praya River or on the remaining canals, continue to ferry goods just like they have done for centuries.

Land Area	: 513,120 km ²
Population	: 67,091,089 (2012 estimate)
Government	: Parliamentary Democracy and Constitutional Monarchy
Time Zone	: UTC/GMT+7 hours
Currency	: Thai Baht
Religion	: Buddhism
Language	: Thai is the official language but English is widely used as unofficial second language.
Weather	: Tropical monsoon climate



Let's Talk About Culture

Local Culture

The rich culture and warm hospitality make Thailand a well-known country among foreigners. It has a unique and complex culture, customs, and etiquette which is rooted in diverse and rich cultural traditions. Thais are courteous and friendly. However, knowing some basic social etiquette may ease your path in social situations.

The “Wai” is a Thai greeting and also used as a gesture of “thanks”. A Wai should always be returned. If they wai, then you may do the same, or alternatively a slight bow or nod of the head is fine.

The Thai word of greeting or farewell is:

- Sawasdee-ka (woman) / Sawasdee-krab (man)

Usually, Thai people call or are called by their first name or nickname in daily conversation. In the office setting or on formal occasions, “Khun” is the polite Thai word for “you” and you can also call them “Khun” followed by his/her name. However, you do not refer to yourself as ‘Khun.’

There is a definite hierarchy in Thai society which has many levels. Among other things, age, social position and wealth affect a person's place in the hierarchy. When Thais meet someone for the first time, it is usual for them to ask several questions to know where they fit in the hierarchy. These questions may seem very personal to some foreigners, but it is best to accept them in good nature and without affront.

Courtesy is essential to Thais. To maintain good relations, being polite and respectful to others is the key. Speaking softly and smiling warmly will always help you to create positive dealings.

Public displays of emotion are best avoided. In no situation is it considered appropriate to show anger or negative emotion. Doing so causes the other person to lose face and will not encourage sympathy or help from others.

Cultural Do's & Don'ts

Do's

Buddhist temples are sacred places, so you should wear proper attire to respect these places and proper manners should be observed.

Always take your shoes off before you go into somebody's home.

Smile more. Thai people always smile back.

Try to learn a little bit of Thai – people there will really appreciate the effort regardless of the fluency.

It is polite to stand for the Royal Anthem which is played before all the movies in the cinemas. Also in some public places, the National Anthem is played every day at 8am and 6pm. Do stop for a moment and wait until it finishes.

Don'ts

Do not touch someone's head as it is considered disrespectful and should be avoided.

Do not place your feet on table or chair in the public area or use your foot to point at anybody or any object.

Do not have physical contact with monks if you are a woman.

Do not raise your voice in work or social environments.

Do not be offended by direct questions since it is quite common for Thais to ask personal questions, for example, your age. It's quite reasonable here.

And most importantly - please remember never to be disrespectful to the Monarchy.



Settling in Tips

Getting Around

Air Travel

Suvarnabhumi International Airport can accommodate 45 million passengers per year and will expand to handle up to 60 million passengers in the future. At the same time, other international and domestic airports around the country offer international standard facilities and convenience to passengers. Further information about Suvarnabhumi Airport is available on www.suvarnabhumiairport.com

The most convenient way for traveling to Thailand is by plane, as visitors can fly to Thailand directly from many countries on both international and Thai airlines.

Moreover, Thailand's geographical advantage makes Thailand an ideal hub for exploring the rest of Asia. In addition to the primary international airport located in Bangkok, visitors from abroad can fly to Thailand on international flights destined for Chiang Mai, Phuket, Koh Samui, Krabi, and so on.

As the major hub for air travel in and around Asia, many low-cost airlines now serve Thailand for both domestic and international routes, and now flying to Thailand is both convenient and inexpensive.

BTS Skytrain

There are currently 2 routes, which are the Sukhumvit Line and the Silom Line. They cover much of the central city, and its many commercial, residential and tourist areas, with extensions planned to outlying areas.

Operating hours: from 6:00 am and 12:00 midnight

Frequency: Service throughout the day, increased during rush hours. Map and further information is available at www.bts.co.th

MRT Subway

The MRT System is currently the only one subway route available, and it is another fast and reliable means of transport. The Chaloem Ratchamongkhon line runs between Hua Lamphong to Bang Sue Station.

Operating hours: from 6:00 a.m. till midnight daily

Frequency: Service throughout the day, increased during rush hours Map and further information is available on www.bangkokmetro.co.th

Taxi Services

Taxi meters are available in along major roads and in suburban areas. They are air-conditioned, reasonably comfortable and inexpensive. The fare starts with the set price at 35 Baht. During rush hours there may be some difficulties to get one.

Hailing taxi when you are in the sub-street could be difficult. Pre-booked taxi service is available with additional cost 20 Baht over the fare. Grab Taxi is available in Bangkok. Please note that there can be a language barrier as many of the drivers don't speak much English. You should show your destination written in Thai to the Taxi driver. That would be the best solution.

Personal Cars

You are required to have a valid work permit and visa to purchase a car along with some other financial documents (i.e., salary slip, copy bank book, etc.) and you need to have your vehicle registered at Department of Land Transport (www.dlt.go.th) which the car dealer or leasing company can assist you to complete this process. However, the car registration needs to be renewed on a yearly basis.

Food

Local Food

Thai food is a primary delight for foreigners. Authentic, local cuisine, with its distinctive taste and enthusiastic use of fresh herbs and spices, is available at inexpensive street stalls as well as more pricey gourmet restaurants.

Top 10 Thai dishes you should try while you're here:

- Tom yam goong (hot and spicy shrimp soup)
- Pad thai (the famous Thai dry noodle dish)
- Kuay tiew (noodle soup)
- Som tam (spicy papaya salad)
- Gai med ma mung (chicken and cashew nuts)
- Kang kheaw whan gai (green curry chicken)
- Tom kha gai (chicken and coconut soup)
- Kao phad (fried rice)
- Massaman curry (made with beef, potatoes, peanuts and coconut milk)
- Khao man gai (chicken and rice)

International Food

All over the world, the enjoyment of food is considered a significant aspect of the enjoyment of life. Thailand's famous cuisine and its people's obvious passion for food is a proud testament to this philosophy. Thailand also offers a wide range of choice of international ethnic food as well as global fast food chains. Thailand features numerous foreign eateries that serve European, Middle Eastern, Chinese, French, Italian, etc. Thailand is indeed a paradise for the gastronomist.

Medical Care

Private Hospitals

Thailand has state-of-the-art medical facilities recognized worldwide. Please find below a list of the main International hospitals in Bangkok:

- **Bangkok Hospital**

2 Soi Soonvijai 7, New Petchburi Road Bangkok, Huay Khwang Bangkok 10310

Providing comprehensive medical care by multidisciplinary teams of well-trained specialists. They have group hospitals named Bangkok Heart Hospital and Wattano-soth Cancer Hospital. Website: www.bangkokhospital.com

- **BNH Hospital**

9/1 Convent Road, Silom, Bangkok 10500

The BNH Hospital, formerly known as the Bangkok Nursing Home Hospital, was established originally to provide nursing care for expatriates. The new BNH Hospital complex became operational in 1996.

Website: www.bnhhospital.com

- **Bumrungrad Hospital**

33 Sukhumvit 3 (Soi Nana Nua), Wattana, Bangkok, 10110

Established in 1980, Bumrungrad Hospital is the first hospital in Asia to be internationally accredited by the US-based Joint Commission International.

Website: www.bumrungrad.com

- **Samitivej Hospital**

133 Sukhumvit 49, Klongtan Nua, Vadhana, Bangkok 10110

Samitivej Hospital opened in 1979. In 1999 Samitivej won a prestigious award from UNICEF, being certified as a Mother and Baby Friendly Hospital.

Website: www.samitivej.co.th

Expatriate Housing

Temporary Accommodation

For those expats who do not know the length of their assignments, hotels and serviced apartments can be a good choice. Not only can these properties be rented on a short-term basis but also the basic necessities, such as kitchenware are often provided. They will also offer cleaning service, internet, etc.

Permanent Housing

Below is the list of the locations of the main expatriate residential areas in Bangkok.

- **Sukhumvit area:** The most well-known and largest expatriate residential area, with a wide range of accommodation options, amenities, several International schools and easy access to both public transport and the expressways.
- **Chaengwattana area:** Chaengwattana Road, to the North of the city, leads to a huge expatriate gated community called Nichada Thani, which has amenities to cover most needs; a school (American curriculum), clubhouse, clinic, mini shops and so on. It takes around 40-60 minutes by expressway from Nichada Thani to the downtown area, depending on traffic.
- **Bangna area:** This area is located to the South East of the city, and is convenient for the airport. The Skytrain now extends into the area making access easier. This is where Bangkok Patana and a couple of other International schools are located.
- **Sathorn area:** This area is the location of a lot of Embassies, and is where a lot of the larger companies and banks and so on have their headquarters. There are still some good options concerning housing around here and is quite popular with the French community in particular.

International Schools

There are several international schools in Bangkok the following are some of the most popular:

- Bangkok Patana School (BPS): British Curriculum

Address : 2/38 Soi Lasalle, Sukhumvit 105

Tel: +66-2398-0200

BPS offers a broad, balanced curriculum which follows the National Curriculum of England. BPS is registered with the UK Department of Education and Employment, and is a member of the International Baccalaureate Organization, Cambridge University International Examinations Syndicate, and EdExcel, the UK GCSE examinations body.

Age range: 2½ - 18+ years

General Information: <http://www.patana.ac.th>

- International School Bangkok (ISB) : American Curriculum

Address : 39/7 Soi Nichada Thani, Samakee Road, Pakkred, Nonthaburi 11120 Tel: +66-2963- 5800

ISB's curriculum is based on the highest North American standards enriched to promote international perspectives. The International Baccalaureate (IB) programme at ISB is the first in Thailand.

Age range: 4 – 18 years

General Information: <http://www.isb.ac.th>

- New International School of Thailand (NIST) : UN accredited

Address : 36 Soi 15 Sukhumvit Road Klongton Nua, Wattana Bangkok 10110 Tel: +66-2651- 2065

Staff at the UN agencies in Bangkok were directly instrumental in setting up the Foundation for International Education and establishing NIST. The school has dual accreditation with ECIS and NEASC. NIST is affiliated with the International Baccalaureate Organization and has a rigorous and fully international curriculum incorporating the IB Primary Years Programme, the IB Middle Years Programme and culminating in the IB diploma.

Age range: 2-18 years

General Information: <http://www.nist.ac.th>

Daily Needs

Banking

Thai banks will usually need to see your passport to open a savings account, and your work permit and a 1-year visa are required to open a checking account.

INTERNATIONAL BANKS

- Citibank

399 Interchange Bldg, Sukhumvit 21 Road (Asoke), Klongton Nua, Wattana, Bangkok 10110

Website: www.citibank.co.th

- HSBC

Bangkok Offshore Banking Unit (The only branch in Bangkok) HSBC Building, 968 Rama IV Road, Silom, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500

Website: www.hsbc.co.th

- Standard Chartered Bank

90 North Sathorn Road, Silom, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500

Local Commercial Banks

- Bangkok Bank, 333 Silom Road, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500

Website: www.bangkokbank.com

- Bank of Ayudhya, 1222 Rama 3 Road, Bangpongpan, Yannawa, Bangkok 10120

Website: www.krungsri.com

- Kasikorn Bank, 1 Soi Rat Burana 27/1, Rat Burana Road, Rat Burana, Bangkok 10140

Website: www.kasikornbank.com

- Siam Commercial Bank, 9 Ratchadapisek Road, Jatujak, Bangkok 10900

Website: www.scb.co.th

Groceries

- Foodland

open 24 hours a day

Website: www.foodland.co.th

- Gourmet Market

located at Siam Paragon, The Emporium Department Store (10am-10pm)

Website: www.gourmetmarketthailand.com

- Villa Market

numerous branches in central Bangkok. Opening hours vary.

Website: www.villamarket.com

Hypermarkets & Convenience Stores

- Big C (9am-11pm)

Website: www.bigc.co.th

- Tesco Lotus (8am-10pm)

Website: www.tescolotus.com

- Tops Market Place

Central and Robinson Department Stores, Opening hours vary

Website: www.tops.co.th

- 7-Eleven

mall convenient stores in every corner of Bangkok – open 24 hours

Website: www.7eleven.co.th

- Central Department Stores (10am-10pm)

Website: <http://www.central.co.th/en/>

- The Emporium (9am-10pm)

Website: www.emporiumthailand.com/

- Siam Paragon (10am-10pm)

Website: <http://www.siamparagon.co.th/>

Home Repairs

Listed below are some of the home repair companies available in Thailand.

- Electrical service

Installing lighting, air conditioner, water pump, etc. and plumbing/welding works

Website: <http://bangkokelectric.byethost4.com>

- ServiceGenie

Offering services for home and office i.e. painting, carpentry, plumbing, etc.

Website: www.servicegenie.com

Utilities

Electricity (Metropolitan Electricity Authority or MEA)

The electricity system is 220 volts x 50 cycles/sec. Billing is on a monthly basis. Payment can be made at banks, some department stores, 7-Eleven, and post office.

Website: www.mea.or.th , call center 1130

Water (Metropolitan Waterworks Authority or MWA)

It is not recommended to drink tap water in Thailand though it is adequate for bathing and teeth cleaning. Billing is on a monthly basis. Payment can be made at banks, some department stores, 7-Eleven, and post office.

Website: www.mwa.co.th , call center 1125

Internet

There are 2 major providers, and their service networks depend on location. Some places can apply for both providers, but some apartments/condos can apply for one only which depends on the provider's service coverage.

- 3 Broadband by TOT

Website: www.3bb.co.th

- True Online by True Corporation

Website: www.trueonline.truecorp.co.th

Home phone

- TOT

Website: www.tot.co.th

- True Online by True Corporation

Website: <http://trueonline.truecorp.co.th>

Mobile phone

Thailand cell phone coverage is widespread with reception available in all areas except at the most remote areas and isolated mountainous regions. Many overseas mobile phones will work in Thailand provided they are GSM compatible, as Thailand features GSM 850 - 2100 networks

- AIS

Website: www.ais.co.th

- DTAC

Website: www.dtac.co.th

- TrueMoveH

Website: <http://truemoveh.truecorp.co.th>

Domestic Help & Nanny

The most common and reliable channel to get the maid and nanny is through referral system. Your colleague who is going to repatriate may need to find the new employee for his/her maid or nanny. This way, you can ask for ex-employer personal opinion. However, there are some sources to look for these kinds of services as below:

- Bangkok Nanny Center

Website: www.bangkoknanny.com

- Children Booster Center and Nursery

Website: www.kidsquare.com

- Nanny and Maid

Website: www.nannyandmaid.com



Let's Have Fun

Networking

There are many clubs for networking, both socially and for business here in Thailand. Please find some examples below:

- American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM)

GPF Witthayu Tower A, 93/1 Wireless Road, Lumpini, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330

AMCHAM provides a point of exchange and coordination of efforts to improve business conditions and opportunities for private Americans and American companies.

Website: www.amchamthailand.com

- Australian Chamber of Commerce

Comprised of companies, businesses, and individuals across a broad spectrum of industries and services, AustCham Thailand has over 400 members.

Website: www.austchamthailand.com

- British Chamber of Commerce

With more than 600 member companies, the BCCT is a valuable resource for all those doing business in Thailand.

Website: <http://members.bccthai.com/>

- American Women's Club of Thailand (AWC)

72/1 Sukhumvit Soi 38, Klong Toey, Bangkok 10110

Promoting friendship with Thais through social, cultural, and charitable activities.

Website: www.awcthailand.org

- Australian New Zealand Women's Group

For more than 50 years ANZWG has played a significant part in the lives of many expatriate women who have been lucky enough to reside in this fascinating yet sometimes challenging city.

Website: <http://www.anzwg-bangkok.org/>

- British Club

189 Suriwongse Road, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500

It is a family-oriented social club which opens to members of all nationalities. Sports facilities and play area are available.

Website: www.britishclubbangkok.org

A vintage payphone is mounted on a wall. In the background, a large, glowing neon sign reads "OPEN 24 HOURS". The sign is made of many small lights. The payphone is a classic model with a coiled cord and a handset. The overall lighting is warm and orange, suggesting a nighttime setting. A semi-transparent yellow banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "Need Help?".

Need Help?

Useful Contacts

Emergency

Tourist Police : 1155
Police, Ambulance : 191
Fire : 199

Medical Numbers

Bangkok Hospital : 1719, 02 310 3000
BNH : 02 022 0700, 02 632 1000 (ambulance)
Bumrungrad : 02 066 8888
Samitivej : 02 711 8181

Others

Telephone Directory Assistance : 1133
International calls : 001 + country code + area code + phone no.
International calls through operator : 100
Internet / Cable TV : 02 725 2525
Metropolitan Electricity Authority (MEA) : 1130 or 02 254 9550
Metropolitan Water Works Authority (MWA) : 1125 or 02 504 0123

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