

THAILAND GUIDE

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

TRANSPORTATION FROM PHUKET AIRPORT TO HILTON PHUKET ARCADIA RESORT & SPA (The distance between Phuket Airport and the Hilton hotel is about 30 miles.)

HOTEL LIMOUSINE

- price 1,400 baht/one-way trip
- drive time: about 45 min.
- contact Hilton hotel at +66-76-396-433

AIRPORT TAXI

- price 750 baht/one-way trip
- drive time: about 45 min.
- contact counters in the airport arrival hall, 1st floor
- Tel. +66-76-351-360 (PMK) or +66-76-351-347-9 (Phuket Limousine and Business Service Co-operative Ltd.)

AIRPORT MINIBUS OR VAN

- price 180 baht/one-way trip
- drive time: about 90 min.
- service between 07.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m. (minimum 5 passengers/trip)
- contact counters in the arrival hall, 1st floor
- Tel. +66-76-351-360 (PMK) or +66-76-351-347-9 (Phuket Limousine and Business Service Co-operative Ltd.)

CAR RENTAL (E.G. AVIS, BUDGET, HERTZ, NATIONAL)

- the rate varies based on size and style of vehicles, ranging between 1,200-2,500 baht/day (insurance and taxes are not included).

FAST FACTS ABOUT THAILAND

from the Tourism Authority of Thailand, www.tourismthailand.org

AREA

Thailand has a rough geographical area of 514,000 sq km (200,000 sq miles). This makes Thailand roughly equivalent in size to France or Texas.

BANKING

Thai bank hours are generally Monday - Friday, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm; certain banks have shorter Saturday hours, and currency exchange booths are open considerably longer hours in Bangkok and other tourist destinations.

CAPITAL

Bangkok

COUNTRY

Thailand, the only Southeast Asian nation never to have been colonized by European powers, is a constitutional monarchy whose current head of state is HM Bhumibol Adulyadej. A unified Thai kingdom has existed since the mid-14th century, and Thailand was known as Siam until 1939, when it officially became the Kingdom of Thailand.

CURRENCY

The currency of Thailand is the Thai Baht. Baht come in both coin and banknote form. The size of Thai currency, both coins and bills, increases with value and varies in color.

ECONOMICS

The economy of Thailand is reliant on exports, which account for 60 percent of Thailand's approximately US\$ 200 billion GDP. The economy of Thailand is the second largest in Southeast Asia. Thailand's exports consist primarily of agricultural products including fish and rice, of which it is the largest exporter in the world, as well as textiles, rubber, automobiles, computers and other electronic appliances, and jewelry. While one of the premier tourist destinations in the world, Thailand relies on tourism to provide only 7 percent of its GDP.

ELECTRICITY

Electrical outlets in Thailand are charged to 220v at 50 cycles per second, which is compatible with appliances from the U.K. but not those from the US and many other nations. While most computer cables have adaptors for voltage, visitors from the U.S. and those not on the 220/50 v. will have to bring adaptors to run most other appliances. Outlets in Thailand generally feature flat, two pronged plugs, though some feature holes for round plug ends. Few outlets feature three holes (grounded outlets), so it is often necessary to have a three to two prong adapter for using notebook computers in Thailand.

LANGUAGE

More than 92 percent of the population speaks Thai or one of its regional dialects. While the Thai language is the official language of Thailand, as a result of its cosmopolitan capital city and established tourism infrastruc-



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ture, English is spoken and understood throughout much of Thailand.

POPULATION

The population of Thailand comprises roughly 65 million citizens, the majority of whom are ethnically Thai, though peoples of Chinese, Indian, Malay, Mon, Khmer, Burmese, and Lao origin are also represented to varying degrees. Approximately 7 million citizens live in the capital city, Bangkok, though this number varies seasonally and is otherwise difficult to accurately count.

POST OFFICE

The Thailand postal service is efficient and reliable with branches in most major towns throughout the Kingdom. Thailand post offices are open M-F, 8am-4:30pm, and Saturday-Sunday, 9am-1pm. However, The Central GPO in Bangkok, located on New Road, is open until 6pm M-F and Saturday-Sunday 9am-1pm. All Thai post offices are closed on public holidays, though most major hotels can arrange to mail letters and parcels on your behalf. In addition to domestic and international mail services, both land and air, standard and registered, the Thailand postal service also provides telegram service.

TELEPHONE

The Thai phone system is both modern and widespread, with comprehensive coverage for cell phones and reliable pay phones found throughout the kingdom. Purchasing a second-hand Thai phone is inexpensive and convenient, and calling from Thailand on a public phone is easy with a phone card available at most convenience stores. Emergency numbers are often three or four digit numbers, including Tourist Police, which is 1155.

TEMPERATURE

Located just 15 degrees north of the equator, Thailand has a tropical climate, and temperatures typically range from 19 to 38 degrees C (66-100 F).

TIME

Thailand Standard time is GMT +7. Thailand does not observe daylight savings.

WEATHER

The weather in Thailand is generally hot and humid, typical of its location within the tropics. Generally speaking, Thailand can be divided into three seasons: "hot" season,

rainy season, and "cool" season, though Thailand's geography allows visitors to find suitable weather somewhere in the country throughout the year.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Thailand uses the metric system for all weights and measurements, with the exception for area, which Thais divide into wa and rai.

PHUKET

from the Tourism Authority of Thailand, www.tourismthailand.org

Phuket, Thailand's largest island and premier beach destination, is located approximately 862 kilometers south of Bangkok and is often dubbed "the pearl of the Andaman", or "the pearl of the south". Its natural attractions include white powdery beaches, limestone cliffs, broad and tranquil bays, tropical in-land forests, and 32 smaller islands.

The island is dominated by a chain of mountains running north-south along the west coast and includes numerous microclimates and a diversity of flora and fauna. Along the coast there are dozens of beaches, each with its own characteristics, ranging from lively Patong Beach to more secluded Mum Nai Bay.

In addition to the many activities and attractions on Phuket itself, there are numerous spectacular day-trip attractions surrounding the island. To the east of Phuket lies Phang Nga Bay, one of the top destinations for sea kayaking. The islands of Mu Koh Phi Phi National Park are a short boat trip to the southeast of Phuket. The Similan and Surin Islands, to the northwest of Phuket, feature some of the finest dive sites in Thailand.

Phuket is located close to the mainland, and there are bridges that allow overland travel to Phuket. Consequently, it is possible to travel there by land, sea, or air.

