

## **Because no matter what you seek as your therapy, you will be able to find it in Thailand....**

If you're looking to restart your life and perhaps make a number of changes, Thailand could not be better suited for you. You will love it – we guarantee it.

Thailand is a perfect place to heal your soul. It's a fantastic country, filled with great beauty and delicious food, perfect weather and incredibly kind smiling, happy people.

**Healing through spirituality:** - Thailand is a great place to delve into Buddhism, meditation or general spirituality — there are all kinds of meditation retreats in Thailand, including silent retreats.

**Healing through learning:** - If you're looking to learn a new skill, Thailand offers the opportunity to learn everything from cooking to a massage class to yoga.

**Healing through nature:** - Immerse yourself in the local culture, by exploring the natural beauty of Ayutthaya

**Healing through health:** - East meets West... BODY, MIND & SOUL - Ayurvedic & Wellness Treatments on offer in all of Thailand

**Healing through food:** - With a street cart on every corner, you're definitely in the right place.

More for Less....probably the biggest selling point of Thailand is that it's an exceedingly pleasant place to spend time for far less than what you'd pay at home. No matter what you decide, **Thailand** will have a way of healing you...

Join us on our **EXCLUSIVE TOUR** specially designed to ***EAT, PRAY, SHOP***

**Included: -**

- Economy Class air fares on EMIRATES or QATAR Airlines ex Johannesburg
- 6 nights' accommodation at a 5\* centrally located hotel in Bangkok.
- Accommodation in a Deluxe Room - TWIN/DOUBLE or SINGLE occupancy
- Breakfast daily at the hotel (*6 in total*)
- All transfers by luxury air-conditioned coach
- English-speaking guide on all transfers and excursions
- 1 x Welcome Dinner at Issaya Siamese Club Restaurant (*excludes drinks & beverages*)
- Full Day Bangkok Tour: Canal tour, flower market, Grand Palace and Wat Po with lunch
- 1 x Bangkok insider: Very Thai – street food dinner (*excludes drinks & beverages*)

Select Incentive Group Travel – Leona Meadows  
P.O.BOX 164, Muizenberg, 7950: Postal Address  
+ 27 (21) 788-2456: Telephone  
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[www.selectincentive.com](http://www.selectincentive.com): Website

- Tuk Tuk Transfer from China Town back to hotel
- Morning Yoga Class (90minutes)
- 180minute BODY, MIND & SOUL - Ayurvedic & Wellness Treatment
- 1 x Dinner at Baan Khanittha at Asiatique (*excludes drinks & beverages*)
- Full day Ayutthaya Heritage site with lunch on cruise (*excludes drinks & beverages*)
- 1 x Dinner at Face Bangkok (*excludes drinks & beverages*)
- Half day - Private Thai Cooking Class (D.I.Y. lunch (*excludes drinks & beverages*))
- Half day - Shopping at Weekend Market (JJ Market)
- 1 x Farewell dinner at Naamsah Bottling Trust (*excludes drinks & beverages*)
- Half day meditation and monk blessing at local temple
- Lunch at Apinara Restaurant (*excludes drinks & beverages*)
- Tips and gratuities to guides, drivers, restaurant and hotel staff
- The use of the Premier Lounge at OR Tambo Airport on the day of departure
- The services of experienced tour managers to supervise all services during the trip
- Current taxes and fuel surcharges

**Excluded: -**

- Transportation into Johannesburg from all other centers
- Comprehensive Travel and Medical Insurance
- Meals and Items not specified mentioned above
- Drinks with meals other than juice/tea/coffee with breakfast
- Items of a personal nature (*hotel extras, laundry, phone calls etc.*)
- Visas: South African passport holders do not require visas to enter Thailand (*Holders of any other passports should check visa requirements before departure*)
- Courier fees to deliver documents to any city outside of Johannesburg
- Any other services not mentioned above

**Conditions: -**

- All prices are based on the current rate of exchange at US\$1.00 = ZAR14.00. Prices are subject to possible rate fluctuations and price adjustments prior to final payment to the international suppliers.
- Departure is subject to a minimum of 20 full-paying passengers participating on this tour. Should less than 20 participants register for the tour, passengers will be offered an alternative departure date or will have their deposits refunded in full.
- A non-refundable deposit of R10 000.00 per person is payable on confirmation of your participation.

Please contact us to book your space on our **EAT, PRAY, SHOP** Tour – which has been designed exclusively by Select Incentive Group Travel.

Kind regards, Leona Meadows  
Select Incentive Group Travel  
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## **BANGKOK**

Bangkok is one of Asia's most cosmopolitan cities. Created as the Thai capital in 1782 by the first monarch of the present Chakri dynasty, Bangkok is Thailand's spiritual, cultural political, commercial, educational and diplomatic center, and a vibrant, fascinating city for visitors to discover. Major tourism attractions include glittering Buddhist temples, royal palaces, timeless "Venice of the East" canal and river scenes, classical dance extravaganzas, a legendary nightlife, and a wide variety of outstanding dining and entertainment options. Numerous air-conditioned shopping centers sell Thai silks, cottons, jewelry, bronze and pewter ware, and many other outstanding handicrafts as well as a host of international brands of clothing, shoes, cosmetics, electronic goods, etc. In Thailand, there is no shortage of where to go, what to see and what to do. Bangkok is the exciting hub from where you can travel to experience its many unique beach, island and mountain destinations, its rich culture and the amazing friendliness of its people. You will quickly realize that Thailand is the most rewarding of all Asian destinations.

*The country invites you to "Be My Guest."*

## **PROGRAM**

### **DAY 1:**

**"Sawasdee" Arrival at Suvarnabhumi International Airport**



Guests arriving at the Suvarnabhumi Airport will proceed to immigration before going to baggage claim belts to collect luggage and then proceed to customs clearance.

The baggage claim area is quite large with 23 rotating belts for baggage collection. Belt numbers 7 – 23 are for International passengers. Passengers should collect baggage and proceed directly through the Customs clearance channel nearest the belt where they collect their baggage. Our Representative will meet us at the Public Arrival Hall and escort the group to the coach for our transfer to the Hotel



**Included:**

- One transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- All portage at the airport and to the hotel
- Parking fees, Toll fees
- Chilled mineral water and cold towels on board

**Check-in at hotel**

**EVENING**

**Welcome Dinner at Issaya Siamese Club Restaurant**

Cuisine: Thai  
Service: Set & Served (family sharing)  
Drink: Beverage Package for own account



The garden at Issaya Siamese Club flourishes because of the rainy season, thus the name Issaya (which is an old Thai word for the rainy season) was chosen to pay homage to this beautiful part of nature. Issaya is the ground floor dining outlet that includes both a dining room and large outdoor terrace. The menu features Chef Kittichai's unique signature Thai cuisine of traditional ingredients and flavors with international and progressive cooking methods. Some of Chef's signature dishes, such as Mussuman Curry Lamb Shank (Mussuman Gae) and Jasmine Flower Flan (Kanom Dok Mali), as well as an ever-changing market menu that highlights seasonal specials, direct from the market, are the heart of the menu.

Issaya also features Chef's garden where guests can see aromatic Thai herbs grown year-round. Chef Kittichai is a pioneer in farm-to-table dining in Thailand and incorporates his purity and freshness beliefs into Issaya.



**Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Reserve table
- Thai set (food only – drinks for own account)

English speaking guide escort for the day

**Overnight at Hotel**

**DAY 2:**

**Breakfast at hotel**

**Full day Bangkok: Canal tour, flower market, Grand Palace and Wat Po with lunch**

Duration: 8 – 9 hours

Depart Hotel: 08:30hrs

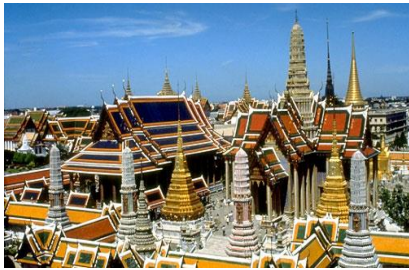


**Morning:**

This tour includes a visit Flower Market and the Klongs (canals) of Thonburi. We start our visit to Bangkok's Flower Market, Thailand's largest flower market. Enjoy a walk-in Bangkok's flower market, smell or buy flowers you like. Continue by long boat on the on the picturesque Chao Phraya River and visit the canals of Thonburi, and stop to visit the majestic Temple of Dawn "Wat Arun"



Enjoy a Thai set **lunch at Mango Tree** on the River Restaurant.



### **Afternoon:**

The Grand Palace is the “must see” attraction in Bangkok. It is an architectural wonder of golden stupas, walls and pillars encrusted in shining and colourful mosaics. Previously the residence of past Kings of Thailand, you will see palaces once used for different occasions; the Reception Hall, the Coronation Hall, the Throne Hall, the Royal Guest House and Wat Phra Kaew. The architecture is predominantly Thai, though there are some European influences. The palace served as the official residence of kings of Thailand from the 18th to the mid-20th century. The most famous building within the palace grounds is Wat Phra Kaew and this is regarded as the most sacred Buddhist temple in Thailand. Continue to Wat Po, with its massive reclining Buddha.

### **Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Private Express boat for canal tour
- Admission fee at Wat Arun
- Reserved table at Mango Tree on the River
- Thai set lunch at Mango Tree on the River (food only - drinks for own account)
- Admission fee at Grand Palace and Wat Po
- Cold towel and drinking water

### **EVENING**

#### **Bangkok insider: Very Thai – street food dinner**

Duration: 4 – 5 hours

Depart Hotel: 18:30hrs



Bangkok's Chinatown or Yaowarat has been a center of trade since Chinese merchants settled here at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is an enthralling place, one of the most authentic and unchanged

spots in the city, and one of the most enjoyable and only spots left for walking. There are so many tiny lanes and narrow alley ways which are ripe for exploration.

**Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Thai street food set with soft drinks
- Cold towel and drinking water

This is so called urban adventure for you as it is the real definition for Cool Hunting experience, especially Trok Nana; a small lane located in Chinatown area. This area is filled with old school shops. Some of them are empty but some are hidden gems waiting to be revealed.

Recommendation's for you to explore this evening after dinner by your own.

**(1) Cho Way**

If you are big fans of craft beer and can't get enough of those delicious homemade brews right here in Bangkok, you will love this place.



Insider Tip: Very steep staircase to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor. One glass of craft beer is THB 150 approx. Roof top is the best spot.

**(2) El Chiringuito**

An old shop house in Yaowarat has been renovated into a tapas bar. The menu lists nine items in chalk on a side wall. Sangria and Spanish gin distinguish the selection of drinks, also written on the wall.



Insider Tip: Small dishes and high-quality alcohol is the signature of this bar.



### (3) Tep Bar

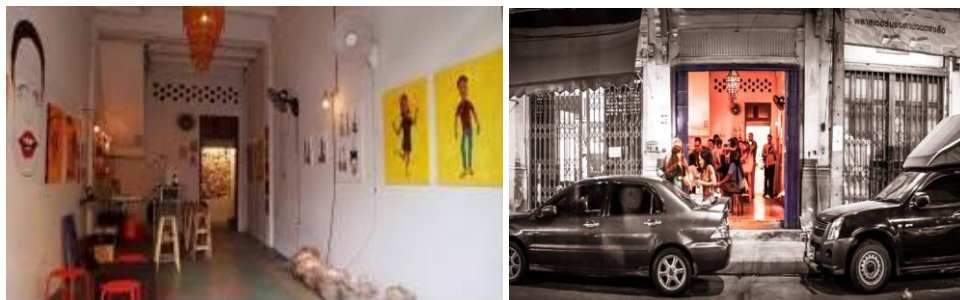
This is the hidden gem in Chinatown. Tep Bar is one of the most professional-looking spots among Chinatown's new wave of shop house bar/ art spaces. Besides local beers, they also do a good line of home infused "Ya Dong" which is traditional herbal Thai white spirit



Insider Tip: Must try Thai-Jito cocktail & Naree Reang Ra Bum cocktail

### (4) 23 Bar & Gallery

Set in an old shop-house on the beginning of Trok Nana. Basic house pours and a soundtrack that fits between 90s Britpop and Restaurant sounds. The walls are lined with the owner's own art with more exhibitions upstairs.



Insider Tip: It even has air conditioning.

**11h30pm - Tuk Tuk Transfer from China Town back to hotel**



Back from Chinatown by tuk tuk convoy (2 guests per 1 tuk tuk) with police escort. Tuk tuks are the most exciting means of transport in Bangkok. They are three-wheeled motorized trishaws affectionately named after the raucous chainsaw noise its engine makes.



**Included:**

- One way transfer by tuk tuk
- Police motorcycle escort

English speaking guide escort for the day

**Overnight at Hotel**

**DAY 3:**

**Breakfast at hotel**

**Morning Yoga Class at Absolute Yoga**

Duration: 2 – 3 hours

Depart Hotel: 06:30hrs



Opened in 2002, Absolute yoga is Thailand's Premier and largest yoga center with 8 boutique hot yoga studios throughout Bangkok. Absolute Yoga believes that 'Yoga is for everyone' and offers the most comprehensive variety of yoga styles and classes, taught by highly skilled certified instructors, to meet the needs of all levels of practitioners.

**Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Private Yoga Class 90 minutes
- Yoga mat
- Locker
- Thai-English speaking Yoga

**1 x 180minute Ayurvedic & Wellness Treatment at Health land**



**SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TREATMENTS: -**

**Purify Me:** Abyanga - Shiro Dhara - Steam Bath - Shower - Refreshments

Health Land Wellness and Ayurvedic Centre encourages our guests to take their spa experience to another level. Moving beyond mere relaxation, these treatments focus specifically on your wellbeing as we help you harmonize the many different elements that affect your health: environmental, emotional and spiritual. Three hours of pure bliss relax the senses and invigorate your body from head to toe.

**Rejuvenate Me:** Abyanga - Shiro Dhara - Shower - Refreshments

The complex processes of the human body are interrelated and influenced by the external environment. When imbalances occur, internally or externally, many types of disease can develop. This programme involves a holistic approach that focuses on treating the whole body, rather than just specific symptoms. The goal of this rejuvenation package is to slow down, stop, or reverse signs of premature aging.

**Back Pain Treatment:** Abyanga - Special Back Pain Treatment - Shower - Refreshments

The aim of this program is to promote overall spinal health - treating existing spinal conditions and preventing potential problems in the future. A special Ayurvedic massage with a herbal bolus and Kati Vasthi (warm medicated oil treatment) are included in the program.

**Body Mind & Spirit:** Abyanga - Shirobyanga - Shiro Dhara - Shower - Refreshments

Relax and unwind in the calm, tranquil environment of Health Land. The stresses and pressures of everyday life can greatly strain a person, both physically and mentally, and it is important for healthy living to escape these stresses and replenish your inner energy. Our BMS package helps you to manage and reduce your stress with a combination of treatments and activities that balance and relax the body, mind and spirit.

Remark: Space is subject to availability upon confirmation

**EVENING**

**Dinner at Baan Khanittha at Asiatique**

Cuisine: Thai  
Service: Set & Served (family sharing)  
Drink: Drinks for own account



For nearly two decades, our guests and friends have always 'felt at home' while enjoying good company and fresh authentic Thai cuisine... using only the very best fresh products without preservatives or chemical such as Monosodium glutamate as well as organic fruit & vegetables straight from our very own Baan Panalai Organic Farm... and served welcomingly...Thai-style.

Baan Khanitha's newest home serves up a panoramic view of the Chao Phraya River, as well as Khanitha's delectable Thai cuisine and legendary hospitable service!

**Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Reserve table
- Thai set (food only – drinks for own account)

**After dinner enjoy shopping at ASIATIQUE**



Asiatique, the River Front is one location you shouldn't miss when visiting Bangkok, it's a shopping and entertainment complex, located near the great Chaopaya River. It is gigantic complex divided in four zones by the theme of past Siam in about of trading harbor.

Back to 19th century, the King Rama built the gigantic Pier called 'Port of East Asiatic', the first pier of Thailand for international trading. Now, the Asiatique the River Front is reformed as landmark of Bangkok in feature of food, entertainment, shopping, fashion and more. Asiatique attracts bargain hunters in their thousands. All manner of things are available here, from famous team football shirts to wooden toys.

The night market offers handicrafts, silk scarves, sarongs, beach clothes, leisure wear, leather goods and luggage, CD's, computer games and electronic gadgets. Lots of stuff is aimed at the teenage

market – recycled jeans, funky shoes and clothes, but also Thai sweets, orchids, ornaments and hair accessories. Set-up time is usually around 6-7pm until late night. Don't forget to bargain!

English speaking guide escort for the day

### **Overnight at Hotel**

### **DAY 4:**

#### **Breakfast at hotel**

#### **Full day Ayutthaya Heritage site with lunch on cruise**

Duration: 8 – 9 hours / Depart Hotel: 07:30hrs



This excursion takes us through beautiful scenery to the north of Bangkok, and onto the ancient city of Ayutthaya, the former capital of Siam. Containing UNESCO-listed temples and stupas, Ayutthaya was the Thai capital for 417 years and is one of Thailand's major tourist attractions. Many ancient ruins can be seen in the city, which was founded in 1350 by King U-Thong. A total of 33 kings of five dynasties ruled the kingdom until it was destroyed by the Burmese in 1767. Included in the itinerary is a visit to the Summer Palace of King Rama V with its mixture of Thai, Chinese and Gothic architecture.

We return to Bangkok by boat and enjoy lunch on board whilst cruising down the Chao Phaya River and watching life on the river pass by at a sleepy pace.

#### **Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Admission fees at Wat Yai Chai Mongkol, Wat Phrasisanphet
- Admission fee at Summer Palace of King Rama V
- Buffet lunch on cruise (food only – drinks for own account) – cruise back to Bangkok
- Cold towel and drinking water

### **EVENING**

#### **Dinner at Face Bangkok**

Cuisine: Thai  
Service: Set & Served (family sharing)  
Drink: Beverage Package for own account

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Face Bangkok restaurant has established itself as one of Bangkok's leading dining Venues, offering Thai, Indian and Japanese cuisines. Diners at Face can mix all three Asian cuisines, or order Thai, Indian and Japanese cuisines separately

Don't miss the Face Bar where one can enjoy Bangkok's best cocktails in a stunning and exotic environment.

**Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Reserve table
- Mix "Thai, India and Japanese" set – (food only – drinks for own account)

English speaking guide escort for the day

**Overnight at Hotel**

**DAY 5:**

**Breakfast at hotel**

**Half day Private Thai Cooking Class at Naj Cooking School (D.I.Y. lunch)**

Duration: 4 – 5 hours

Depart Hotel: 08:00hrs



For hundreds of years Thai cooking wisdom has been passed down from generation to generation. Naj continues this custom by offering Thai cooking classes to carry on the Thai homemade culinary tradition while, nonetheless, enhancing the art of living and well-being.

After that, you are center stage, cooking - and sampling - your own creations.

**Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Visit fresh market with chef
- Thai Cooking Class (4 dishes)
- Ingredients for Thai cooking
- Additional dishes from chef for your lunch
- Drinks for your own account

**AFTERNOON**

**Shopping at Weekend Market (JJ Market)**

Duration: 4 – 5 hours



Once only popular among wholesalers and traders, Chatuchak Weekend Market has reached a landmark status as a must-visit place for tourists. Its sheer size and diverse collections of merchandise will bring any seasoned shoppers to their knees – this is where you can literally shop ‘till you drop’.

The 35-acre (68-rai) area of Chatuchak is home to more than 8,000 market stalls. On a typical weekend, more than 200,000 visitors come here to sift through the goods on offer. Veteran shoppers would agree that just about everything is on sale here, although not all at the best bargain rates. But if you have one weekend in Bangkok, squeeze in a day trip to Chatuchak Weekend Market and you will not be disappointed.

**Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle (minivan, loading 7-8 pax)
- Cold towel and drinking water (on the coach)

**EVENING**

**Farewell dinner at Naamsah Bottling Trust**

Cuisine: Thai  
Service: Set & Served (family sharing)  
Drink: Beverage Package for own account



Namsaah Bottling Trust is an Asian gastro bar located on Silom Soi 7 (Soi Sirijullassayvok). The collective brainchild of Chef Ian Kittichai, music impresario Frederic Meyer, diplomat Jeremy Opritesco and nightlife guru Justin Dunne, Namsaah is the culmination of their respective talents to create this bespoke bar and restaurant experience in the heart of Bangkok. Housed in an early 20th century grand villa, the focus is on classic and whimsical cocktails as well as Asian bar food and larger sharing dishes.

The name of the venue pays homage to its colorful history. The house has played numerous roles a residence of a royal aide-de-camp, a soda company's bottling office, and the headquarters of a bank. The Thai word "namsaah" is an old-fashioned word referring to sparkling water or soda water.

**Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Reserve table
- Thai set – (food only – drinks for own account)

English speaking guide escort for the day

**Overnight at Hotel**

**DAY 6:**

**Breakfast at hotel**

**Half day meditation and monk blessing at local temple**

Duration: 4 – 5 hours

Depart Hotel: 08:00hrs





Visit one of the temples in Bangkok to attend the meditation before Monk's Blessing Ceremony. The monks will chant their mantras and sprinkle holy water to bring good luck to the participants while you will present offerings to them in return.

**Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Meditation at local temple
- Monk's blessing ceremony
- Offering to the monk

**Lunch at Apinara Restaurant**

Cuisine: Thai  
Service: Set & Served (family sharing)  
Drink: Beverage Package for own account



Apinara epitomizes exquisite Thai culinary traditions with contemporary flourishes. A concept Thai cocktail bar and meticulous service ensure a memorable dining experience.

**Included:**

- Roundtrip transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Reserve table
- Thai set – (food only –drinks for own account)

**DAY 7:**

**Breakfast at hotel**

Transfer from hotel to Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok





**Included:**

- Transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Toll way fees
- Cold towel and drinking water on board

English speaking guide escort for the transfer

**\*\* END THAILAND PROGRAM \*\***

***VISITING THAILAND***

**THE CLIMATE:** Thailand lies in a tropical zone and shares the same weather patterns as most Southeast Asian countries situated just north of the equator. An understanding of these weather patterns can help you choose beforehand the season best suited to your participants.

Monsoons, not latitude, determine the seasons in Thailand. Monsoons are seasonal winds that change direction during the year as a result of differences in temperature and pressure between land and sea.

The climate of Thailand varies widely from region to region. Rainfall patterns and temperature levels described apply only to the central plains, including Bangkok and the north i.e. Chiang Mai. These insular regions are subjected only to the summer monsoon, which brings three distinct seasons: dry (Nov – Feb), hot (Mar – Jun) and rainy (Jun – Nov). Variations within seasons and between years can slightly alter these monthly guidelines.

The exception to the 'one monsoon, three seasons' rule is the peninsular world of southern Thailand, especially the southeast coast, which experiences both summer and winter monsoons. Winter rains – uncommon in the north – are caused by winds from the northeast passing over the Gulf of Thailand and thereby accumulating humidity. As a result of alternating monsoons, which also dictate temperatures, southern Thailand has just two seasons - wet and dry.

The climate here is similar to that of its peninsular neighbor, Malaysia, which experiences few variations between seasons. Year round, the area is warm and humid, with rain falling at any time

but heaviest during the summer months and during the so-called 'dry season' months of December and January.

There can be significant differences in rainfall levels between the west and east coasts depending on the strength of the storm. Travelers on Koh Samui surprised by sudden showers might find drier conditions across the peninsula on Phuket Island.

WEATHER AVERAGES FOR THAILAND												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
High °C	32	33	35	38	36	34	32	31	30	31	32	31
Low °C	26	28	30	30	29	28	27	27	26	28	29	29

**VISA:** Foreign visitors from 60 countries and Hong Kong SAR can enter Thailand without a visa for a period not exceeding 30 days. Visitors from a further 22 countries may apply for a visa on arrival at the airport, valid for 15 days.

**CUSTOMS:** All kinds of narcotics (hemp, opium, cocaine, morphine, heroin), counterfeit goods, obscene literature, pictures and articles are prohibited. Visitors may bring in without duty 200 cigarettes, or 250 gms of cigars or tobacco, or in total not exceeding 250 gms. One litre of alcoholic beverage (wine or spirits) may be brought in duty free.

**CLOTHING:** Light, cool clothes are sensible and a jacket is needed for formal meetings and dining in top restaurants. Shorts (except knee-length walking shorts), sleeveless shirts, tank tops and other beach-style attire are considered inappropriate dress when not actually at the beach or in a resort area.

**HEALTH REGULATIONS:** Vaccination certificates are not required for visitors unless coming from or passing through a designated "contaminated" area. Bangkok, major Thai cities and resorts have excellent medical facilities and most hotels have doctors on 24-hour call.

**CUISINE:** The cuisine is unquestionably one of the highlights of a visit to Thailand. Forty years ago, Thai food was largely unknown outside the country. Today, the dramatic proliferation of Thai restaurants in every corner of the planet has made Thai food one of the most popular cuisines in the world. However, tasting authentic Thai food in the country of its birth, with all the regional variations and fabulous seafood, is an experience well worth savoring.

**CURRENCY:** The Thai unit of currency is the baht (approximate exchange rate is Baht 30.3 to US\$1). One baht is divided into 100 satang. Notes are in denominations of 1,000, 500, 100, 50 and 20 baht. Coins consist of 25 satang, 50 satang, 1 baht, 2 baht, 5 baht and 10 baht. ATM machines are common. Credit cards are widely accepted at hotels, restaurants and in shopping malls. Major currency bills and traveler's cheques are cashed easily at banks, hotels, tourist shops, money changers and at exchange facilities at the airport on arrival.

**MOBILE PHONES:** If your phone has international roaming, you will be able to use it during your stay here. Otherwise, local SIM cards are available at a reasonable price whilst in Thailand.

**TIPPING:** Tipping is not standard practice in Thailand, although it is becoming increasingly common. Many larger hotels and restaurants add a 10% service charge to the bill. You should tip at your own discretion, however for FIT clients we recommend you allow \$30 per day for your driver and guide (more for groups).

**VAT REFUNDS:** Goods and services in Thailand are subject to a value-added tax of 7%. International visitors are entitled to refunds of VAT paid only on goods purchased at shops, department stores and other retail outlets displaying "VAT Refund for Tourists" signs. Have the shop fill in the tax refund application form. Prior to check-in at the airport for departure, present the completed VAT refund form, plus passport information, tax receipts and your purchases to a customs officer for inspection. Certain luxury goods (jewelry, watches, gold ornaments, etc) must be shown to an excise official at the VAT refund office in the departure lounge.

**SOCIAL CUSTOMS:** Thais are tolerant, easy going people with ready smiles and appreciate courteous behavior. They hold great reverence for the monarchy and their Buddhist religion, and will take offense at anyone making disparaging remarks about either institution. Visitors to temples or royal palaces must always dress with appropriate modesty. Females should not attempt to touch or hand anything directly to Buddhist monks as this is against their precept of celibacy.

Traditionally, Thais greet each other with a *wai* (pressing the palms together at the chest). If a Thai offers a *wai* to you, then it is proper to return the gesture. Please avoid touching people on the head as Thais dislike this action, believing the head to be the most sacred part of the body. It is also inappropriate to use the foot for pointing.