

Bangkok 90-Day Survival Guide

Long-stay city guide for budget nomads.

For The Lean Nomad — Built 2026-07-06

How to Use This Guide

This guide is for someone landing in Bangkok with no local knowledge and no support network. Everything has been researched for the 2026 landscape: visa rules, transport, housing, food, healthcare, and real costs. Claims are sourced from Wikipedia, Wikivoyage, official Thai sources, and a verified POI list. If a detail could not be confirmed, it was omitted rather than guessed.

0. City Overview & Quick Facts

Bangkok is Thailand's capital and largest city, officially known in Thai as **Krung Thep Maha Nakhon** ("City of Angels"). The full ceremonial name is the longest place name in the world at 168 letters, but locals simply call it **Krung Thep**. It sits on the delta of the Chao Phraya River, roughly 14 degrees north of the equator, which gives it a tropical savanna climate with year-round heat and a pronounced monsoon season.

	Quick Fact
Population (metro)	~11–15 million depending on boundary definitions
Currency	Thai Baht (THB); \$1 USD 35–37 THB
Language	Thai; English works in hotels, malls, hospitals, and major transport hubs
Time zone	ICT (UTC+7)
Electricity	220V, Type A/C plugs (same as US/Japan flat pins)
Internet	AIS, TrueMove H, DTAC; tourist SIMs 150–300 THB/month
Drinking water	Never tap; bottled or reverse-osmosis vending machines
Emergency	Tourist Police 1155, Police 191, Ambulance 1669

Why Bangkok for 90 Days?

Bangkok is one of the cheapest major cities on Earth for a decent standard of living. A private studio with a pool and gym can cost \$400–700/month. Street meals run 40–80 THB. Private hospitals with JCI accreditation charge a fraction of Western rates. English-speaking doctors are common in the private system. The BTS and MRT let you move efficiently above and below the gridlock.

The downsides are real: heat indexes above 45°C in April, chronic air pollution from January through April, motorbike accident risk, aggressive tuk-tuk touts in tourist zones, and a visa framework that requires planning. This guide treats those as manageable constraints, not reasons to avoid the city.

Three Bangkoks in One

- **Tourist Bangkok** — Rattanakosin (Old City), Khao San Road, Grand Palace, Wat Pho, Wat Arun. Historic, crowded, cash-heavy, no rail.
- **Expat/Nomad Bangkok** — Sukhumvit, Silom, Thonglor, Ari. Air-conditioned condos, coworking spaces, specialty coffee, Grab, international grocery stores.
- **Local Bangkok** — Ladprao, Bang Na, Nonthaburi, the Thonburi canals. Cheaper rent, better street food, minimal English, slower pace.

A successful 90-day stay usually means basing yourself in expat/nomad Bangkok while making targeted trips into tourist and local Bangkok.

Money Reality Check

A lean 90-day budget runs \$1,000–1,300/month. A comfortable flashpacker budget runs \$1,800–2,500/month. Your biggest variable is housing: a \$400 studio in Chatuchak versus an \$1,800 serviced apartment in Thonglor changes everything. Healthcare and dental work are cash expenses for most nomads because standard travel insurance excludes outpatient care and routine dental.

Health Baseline

Before arrival, get hepatitis A/B, typhoid, and tetanus boosters. Carry a 90-day supply of any prescription medication in original packaging with a copy of the prescription. Bangkok pharmacies are liberal with antibiotics but conservative with controlled substances. Bring documentation.

1. Landing — First 72 Hours

Bangkok has two airports 30 km out on opposite sides: **Suvarnabhumi (BKK)** east for full-service airlines, and **Don Mueang (DMK)** north for low-cost carriers like Air Asia and Nok Air. If you must transfer between them, a free shuttle bus runs only if you show a boarding pass; it takes an hour on good days, but highway congestion often stretches this to 2–3 hours, so never book tight connections.

At BKK, immigration queues run at least 30 minutes and can hit nearly 2 hours on bad days; factor this into your first-night booking. Once through, the **Airport Rail Link (ARL)** is your cheapest escape: 30 minutes to **Phaya Thai** station for roughly 15–45 THB, with a direct interchange to the BTS Skytrain. A taxi costs 300–500 THB plus tolls and takes 30–90 minutes depending on gridlock; insist on the meter to avoid flat-rate scams. The airport express bus (150–200 THB) drops near major hotel zones in 45–90 minutes but gets stuck in rush-hour traffic on **Sukhumvit** and **Silom** roads. From DMK, public buses A1 and A2 connect to the MRT and BTS for 30–50 THB, saving you from the taxi touts outside arrivals.

Buy a tourist SIM from **AIS**, **TrueMove H**, or **DTAC** at the airport or any 7-Eleven; packages run roughly 150–300 THB per month. You must show your passport to register—the shop clerk will photocopy it. Top-up cards are available at any 7-Eleven, so don't overbuy data at the airport kiosk.

You need physical Thai Baht immediately upon leaving the terminal. Cards are accepted at hotels, malls, and chain restaurants, but cash is mandatory for street food, taxis, tuk-tuks, markets, and BTS Rabbit card top-up machines. Break large notes at the airport convenience store; drivers and vendors rarely carry change for 1,000 THB bills, and “no change” is a common soft scam.

First Night: Where to Sleep

Sleep near rail transit to avoid taxi negotiations and gridlock. These three zones match different budgets and put you within one transfer of the airport line or a direct BTS/MRT link:

- **Sukhumvit (Nana/Asok)** — BTS Sukhumvit Line to Phaya Thai (ARL). Dense, malls, nightlife. Hotels: ibis Styles Sukhumvit 4 ~\$40–70; Aloft Sukhumvit 11 ~\$70–120; Cabochon Soi 45 ~\$120–220.
- **Silom/Sathorn** — BTS Silom Line + MRT. Business district, street food, Lumpini Park. Hotels: Lub d Silom ~\$15–40; Eastin Grand Sathorn ~\$100–180; COMO South Sathorn ~\$200–400.
- **Old City / Rattanakosin** — No rail; ferry, bus, tuk-tuk only. Temples and Khao San backpacker density. Avoid on a heavy-luggage first night.

Avoid the Old City for your first night if you carry heavy luggage; you'll pay tuk-tuk premiums or haul bags through unmarked alleys. Sukhumvit and Silom offer metered taxi stands and direct airport-rail connections, minimizing your exposure to traffic and scams.

Navigation Survival Sukhumvit Road changes names every few kilometers: it becomes **Phloen Chit** near **Witthayu Road**, then **Rama I Road** after **Ratchadamri**. Addresses use “soi” (side street) numbers—odd on one side, even on the other—but they rarely align (Soi 55 can face Soi 36). When asking directions, use neighborhood names like “Thong Lo” or “Nana,” not soi numbers, and reference directions as “toward the river” or “away from the river”; the **Chao Phraya River** is the only fixed landmark in a city where street names

shift constantly.

2. Visa & Immigration

Skip the downtown trek. Bangkok's immigration bureaucracy operates out of two northern offices, neither near the tourist hubs of Sukhumvit or Silom. Knowing which facility handles your specific paperwork saves hours in transit and queue time.

- **Immigration Bureau Chaeng Wattana** — 120 Moo 3, Chaeng Wattana Road, Thung Song Hong, Lak Si, Bangkok 10210. Handles extensions and mandatory 90-day reports. This is the main government complex for long-stay reporting formalities.
- **IT Square Laksi Immigration** — 318 Phahon Yothin Road, Anusawari, Bang Khen, Bangkok 10220, inside IT Square mall. Handles extensions; mall-based office with potentially shorter waits.

Visa-Exempt Entry

Most Western passport holders get a 30-day visa-exempt stamp on arrival by air. Land borders usually grant 15 days. You cannot renew this by a quick border hop in the same calendar cycle anymore; Thai immigration cracked down on “visa runs.” Plan accordingly.

Tourist Visa (TR)

Apply at a Thai embassy/consulate before arrival. A single-entry tourist visa grants 60 days and is extendable once for an additional 30 days at immigration (1,900 THB). Total: 90 days legal stay in one trip. This is the simplest path for a real 90-day Bangkok stay.

Extension Process

Bring your passport, one passport photo, a completed TM.7 form, photocopies of your passport data page and entry stamp, and 1,900 THB cash. Dress conservatively. Morning arrival (before 08:00) at Chaeng Wattana or IT Square Laksi saves hours. Processing usually takes 1–3 hours same day, though some offices may ask you to return the next afternoon.

Overstay Penalties

Overstay is serious. The fine is 500 THB per day, capped at 20,000 THB, plus possible detention and blacklisting if caught before paying. Do not overstay even one day.

Emergency Assistance: For immigration disputes or legal trouble, contact the Tourist Police at their headquarters on Ratchadamri Road in Lumpini, Pathum Wan. Dial **1155** for direct assistance.

3. Money & Banking

Cash vs. Cards: The Split Cards work at hotels, malls like Siam Paragon and CentralWorld, and chain restaurants including Villa Market on Sukhumvit 33 and Tops Market at CentralWorld. Cash is mandatory for street food, taxis, tuk-tuks, markets, and BTS top-up machines. Carry small notes—drivers rarely break 1,000 baht.

Airport Money Tactics Land with Thai baht already in hand. While good money changing options exist at the BKK metro station, you need cash immediately for the Airport Rail Link (45 baht to Phaya Thai) or the S1 express bus to Khao San Road. Taxi rides to the city center cost 250–400 baht plus expressway tolls of 50 and 25 baht.

ATM Strategy Withdraw large amounts to dilute flat foreign-card fees across more baht; frequent small withdrawals bleed money.

Bank	Characteristic	Best For
Bangkok Bank	Widespread, reliable	General withdrawals
SCB	Strong digital app	Tech-savvy users
Kasikorn (KBank)	Foreigner-friendly ATMs	Tourists
Krungthai	Government bank, common	State-related areas

Machines cluster at Siam Paragon, CentralWorld, and Robinson Department Store Sukhumvit.

Digital Banking Use Wise or Revolut for mid-market exchange rates. Top up these accounts before departure to avoid airport exchange spreads.

Local Bank Accounts Opening a Thai bank account as a tourist is very difficult. Requirements typically include a long-stay visa, local address proof, and sometimes employment. Do not rely on local banking unless you hold a retirement or work visa.

Risk Management Bring a backup card and store it separately from your primary. If your main card is skimmed or eaten by a machine at a busy station like Phaya Thai or Makkasan, you are not stranded without funds.

4. Neighborhoods & Housing

- Sukhumvit/Nana/Asok — **Best For:** Nightlife, networking, convenience; **Transit:** BTS Nana–Asok; **Monthly rent / nightly USD:** Hotels \$25–80; apts \$600–1,200; **The Catch:** Noise, sleaze on lower sois

- Silom/Sathorn — **Best For:** Finance, co-working, LGBTQ+ scene; **Transit:** BTS Sala Daeng / MRT Silom; **Monthly rent / nightly USD:** Hotels \$30–100; apts \$700–1,400; **The Catch:** Dead weekends, traffic
- Old City/Rattanakosin/Khao San — **Best For:** Culture on a shoestring, history; **Transit:** Ferries, buses, no rail; **Monthly rent / nightly USD:** Hotels \$15–50; apts \$400–700; **The Catch:** No Skytrain, tourist hordes
- Siam/Pathum Wan — **Best For:** Shopping, air-con cafés; **Transit:** BTS Siam / National Stadium; **Monthly rent / nightly USD:** Hotels \$40–120; apts \$800–1,500; **The Catch:** Tourist prices, congestion
- Thonglor/Ekkamai — **Best For:** Trendy cafés, expat social life; **Transit:** BTS Thong Lo / Ekkamai; **Monthly rent / nightly USD:** Hotels \$35–90; apts \$700–1,300; **The Catch:** Pricier, spread out
- Ari — **Best For:** Authentic food, quiet, local feel; **Transit:** BTS Ari; **Monthly rent / nightly USD:** Hotels \$20–60; apts \$500–900; **The Catch:** Limited nightlife, 20 min to center
- Riverside/Charoen Krung — **Best For:** Romance, history, resort feel; **Transit:** Ferry, MRT Sanam Chai; **Monthly rent / nightly USD:** Hotels \$60–300; apts \$800–1,600; **The Catch:** Isolated, traffic to BTS
- Chatuchak/Ladprao — **Best For:** Budget living, JJ Market, space; **Transit:** MRT Chatuchak / BTS Mo Chit; **Monthly rent / nightly USD:** Hotels \$15–40; apts \$350–650; **The Catch:** Commute, few nomad cafés **Sukhumvit**

The Sukhumvit corridor is the default nomad base, offering a spectrum from the budget-friendly ibis Styles Sukhumvit 4 near Nana BTS to the party-centric Aloft Bangkok Sukhumvit 11, while boutique seekers retreat to Cabochon Hotel’s 1920s Shanghai aesthetic on Soi 45. It is the city’s most connected artery, but lower sois near Nana and Asok trade convenience for red-light district noise and persistent traffic.

Coworking spaces like The Hive and Hubba are walkable, and the BTS line puts you 15 minutes from Siam or Thonglor. For 90-day stays, prioritize Soi 31–49 for relative quiet while keeping Terminal 21 and Benchakitti Park within reach.

Silom

By day, Silom is a concrete canyon of finance; by night, it transforms into the city’s LGBTQ+ heart and street-food battleground, with Lub d Bangkok Silom offering social hostel energy and COMO Metropolitan Bangkok providing minimalist luxury on South Sathorn. The area balances serious co-working infrastructure—JustCo and Glowfish—with some of Bangkok’s best pad thai at night markets.

Weekends here are eerily quiet as offices empty, but you’re one BTS stop from Siam and walking distance to Lumpini Park for morning runs. The MRT interchange at Silom adds subway access when the BTS fails.

Old City

Rattanakosin is Bangkok's time capsule, where golden spires dominate the skyline and Khao San Road offers cheap digs for weekend warriors, though long-term nomads should look deeper into the residential fringes near Wat Pho to escape the bucket-list crowds. There is no Skytrain, so mobility relies on ferries, buses, and Grab bikes weaving through tourist buses.

It is the only place to walk to Wat Arun at sunrise before the heat hits, but café culture is limited and internet speeds lag behind Sukhumvit. Best for history buffs who can tolerate tuk-tuk touts for three months.

Thonglor/Ekkamai

Thonglor is Bangkok's Brooklyn—converted warehouses hosting third-wave coffee roasters, Japanese izakayas, and the city's densest concentration of Instagrammable brunch spots. The BTS stations bookend the zone, but the real action lies down the sois where rent jumps 20% for the privilege of walking to Roast or Toby's.

It is the epicenter of the Japanese expat community, meaning excellent ramen and supermarket imports, but the lack of parks and higher prices make it less practical for budget-conscious nomads. Co-working is limited to niche cafés; most here work from home or commute to Asok hubs.

Ari

Ari feels like a village swallowed by the metropolis—shophouse cafés, street-side curry stalls, and minimal skyscrapers. The Yard Hostel Bangkok anchors the creative crowd with its container architecture and communal courtyard, while the surrounding sois hide jazz bars and local designers.

It is quieter and cheaper than Sukhumvit, with a 15-minute BTS ride to Siam, but the neighborhood shuts down early and you will find yourself taxiing to Thonglor for nightlife. Perfect for nomads prioritizing authentic Thai street life over rooftop bars.

Riverside

Charoen Krung is experiencing a renaissance, but the zone remains defined by its five-star anchors: the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok and The Peninsula Bangkok, both offering river-resort living with shuttle boats to Saphan Taksin BTS. The area trades connectivity for tranquility, with the MRT Blue Line now reaching Sanam Chai to ease isolation.

It is historically significant—Bangkok's first road—and home to emerging galleries and Michelin street food, but daily commuting to Asok or Silom requires ferry-and-BTS gymnastics. Best for nomads with higher budgets who treat the city like a slow-paced retreat rather than a grind hub.

Chatuchak

Ladprao is Bangkok's underrated residential belt, where the famous Chatuchak Weekend Market provides weekly retail therapy and the MRT connects you to

the rest of the city without the tourist tax. Apartments here are significantly larger and cheaper—think \$400 for 50 sqm with a pool—though the café scene is utilitarian rather than trendy.

You will commute 30–45 minutes to central coworking spaces, but the presence of Union Mall, Central Ladprao, and actual green space at Chatuchak Park makes this the choice for nomads who want to live like middle-class Thais rather than expats. Street food is excellent and half the price of Sukhumvit.

Apartment Hunting Tips

Skip Airbnb markups by searching Facebook groups like “Bangkok Apartments” or using Thai sites like DDproperty and RentHub; secure a 30-day hotel stay first to view units in person, as photos lie. Target buildings with fiber internet (True or AIS), confirm the kitchen has a stove (many Thai condos have only microwaves), and negotiate—landlords often drop 10–15% for 3–6 month commitments paid upfront. Avoid Khao San for long-term leases due to noise ordinances and tourist volatility, and always verify the condo allows Airbnb-style short-term rentals if you plan to sublet later.

5. Transport

BTS Skytrain

Two elevated lines run air-conditioned trains above the gridlock: the **Sukhumvit Line** (light green) and the **Silom Line** (dark green). They intersect at **Siam Square**, the closest thing Bangkok has to a center. Operating hours are roughly 06:00–24:00. Fares run **17–59 THB** based on distance. Get a **Rabbit stored-value card** at any station ticket office to skip single-journey token queues; the top-up machines accept cash only, and staff will break large bills at the counter. Rush hour (07:30–09:00 and 17:00–19:00) packs platforms and trains; avoid if your schedule is flexible.

Key BTS interchanges: - **Asok** connects to MRT Sukhumvit. - **Sala Daeng** connects to MRT Si Lom. - **Mo Chit** connects to MRT Chatuchak Park via a covered 300-meter walk. - **Saphan Taksin** connects to the Chao Phraya Express Boat and the free shuttle boats to ICONSIAM.

MRT Subway

The **Blue Line** runs from Lak Song to Tha Phra via Hua Lamphong and is the workhorse for north-south travel. The **Purple Line** serves the northern suburbs from Khlong Bang Phai to Tao Poon, where you can switch to the Blue Line or access **Krung Thep Aphiwat Central Terminal** for north-bound trains. Fares run **16–42 THB**. The MRT uses its own stored-value card, separate from the BTS Rabbit card—buy tokens from touchscreen machines or get a pass at the counter if you commute daily. Air conditioning is arctic; carry a light layer.

Airport Rail Link (ARL)

From **Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK)**, the red **City Line** is the budget choice. It costs **45 THB** flat fare and runs every 10–15 minutes from 06:00 to 24:00. Useful stops: - **Makkasan** (22 minutes): connects to MRT Phetchaburi via a 300-meter outdoor walk. - **Phaya Thai** (26 minutes): connects to the BTS Sukhumvit Line.

For heavy luggage or late-night arrivals, a metered taxi is easier. Flag fall is 35 THB; the ride to Sukhumvit runs **250–400 THB** plus 50 and 25 THB tolls.

Don Mueang Airport (DMK)

No train serves DMK. Public buses run from 07:00 to 23:00: - **A1 to Mo Chit** (BTS/MRT): **30 THB**, 20–30 minutes. - **A2 to Victory Monument** (BTS): **30 THB**, 30–40 minutes. - **A4 to Khao San Road/Sanam Luang**: **50 THB**, 45–60 minutes.

Metered taxis add a **50 THB airport surcharge**. Allow 2–3 hours if transferring between BKK and DMK.

Taxis vs. Grab vs. Tuk-Tuks vs. Moto-Taxis

- **Metered taxis**: Flag fall 35 THB (first 2 km), then roughly 5–6 THB per km. Insist on the meter by saying “meter krub.” Drivers often refuse short trips or demand flat rates during rain. Have your destination written in Thai. Toll fees (25–50 THB) are your responsibility.
- **Grab**: Shows a fixed price upfront, typically 20–40% more than a metered taxi but eliminates haggling. **GrabBike** is cheaper and faster in gridlock, but not insured.
- **Tuk-tuks**: 100–200 THB minimum for short tourist rides. Negotiate hard before boarding and fix the price. No meter, no AC, and the exhaust will coat your lungs.
- **Moto-taxis**: Street-corner drivers in colored vests charge 10–50 THB for hops under 2 km. Helmets are sometimes absent; only use them when traffic is a parking lot and you are traveling light.

Chao Phraya Express Boat

The **Orange Flag** boat is the budget line: roughly **15 THB** flat fare, every 15 minutes, 06:00–19:00. Key stops include **Saphan Taksin** (BTS), **Tha Chang** (Grand Palace), **Tha Tien** (Wat Pho), and **Tha Phra Athit** (Khao San). The **Blue Flag** tourist boat costs more and stops less frequently. Boats beat gridlocked roads for riverside sightseeing; bring sunscreen and exact change.

Intercity Bus & Rail

- **Mo Chit 2 (Chatuchak)**: Northern and Isaan buses. Reach it via BTS/MRT Mo Chit.
- **Ekkamai Bus Terminal**: Eastern buses, including Pattaya and Rayong.

- **Southern Bus Terminal (Sai Tai Mai):** Kanchanaburi, Phuket, Surat Thani. Phone: +66 2 894 6122.
- **Krung Thep Aphiwat Central Terminal:** North-bound and north-east-bound State Railway trains, accessible via MRT Tao Poon / Bang Sue.
- **State Railway bookings:** dticket.railway.co.th.
- BTS Skytrain — **Cost:** 17–59 THB; **Notes:** Daily commuting above traffic. Rush-hour crush; no integration with MRT.
- MRT Subway — **Cost:** 16–42 THB; **Notes:** North-south and Blue/Purple coverage. Long interchange walks.
- Airport Rail Link — **Cost:** 45 THB; **Notes:** BKK to Phaya Thai/Makkasan. Phaya Thai taxi queues at rush hour.
- DMK Bus A1/A2/A4 — **Cost:** 30–50 THB; **Notes:** Budget DMK transfer. Traffic can double stated time.
- Metered Taxi — **Cost:** 35 THB + distance; **Notes:** Heavy luggage, late night. Watch for driver refusal / flat-rate scams.
- Grab — **Cost:** Upfront quote; **Notes:** Fixed price, no Thai needed. 20–40% premium, airport pickup zones.
- Tuk-tuk — **Cost:** 100–200+ THB; **Notes:** Novelty only. Exhaust fumes, rip-off rates.
- Moto-taxi — **Cost:** 10–50 THB; **Notes:** Short hops in gridlock. Accident risk, no helmet sometimes.
- Chao Phraya boat — **Cost:** ~15 THB; **Notes:** Riverside temples. Crowded at sunset; stops early.
- BKK — **Option:** Airport Rail Link; **Cost:** 45 THB; **Notes:** 30 min to Phaya Thai/BTS. Best for budget/light luggage.
- BKK — **Option:** Metered taxi; **Cost:** 250–400 THB + tolls; **Notes:** 40–90 min. Heavy luggage/groups.
- BKK — **Option:** LimoBus / public bus; **Cost:** 60–150 THB; **Notes:** 45–90 min. Ultra-budget to Khao San/Silom.
- DMK — **Option:** Bus A1 to Mo Chit; **Cost:** 30 THB; **Notes:** 20–30 min. Quick BTS/MRT connection.
- DMK — **Option:** Bus A2 to Victory Monument; **Cost:** 30 THB; **Notes:** 30–40 min. Central Bangkok on a budget.
- DMK — **Option:** Bus A4 to Khao San; **Cost:** 50 THB; **Notes:** 45–60 min. Direct to old city.
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DMK — Option: Metered taxi; Cost: 200–400 THB + tolls; Notes: 30–60 min. Heavy luggage, late night.

6. Food & Dining

- Street — **Price Range:** 40-80 THB; **Where to Eat:** Sidewalk stalls, markets; **Best For:** Quick meals, authenticity
- Local — **Price Range:** 80-150 THB; **Where to Eat:** Food courts, shophouses; **Best For:** Air-con, variety
- Mid — **Price Range:** 150-300 THB; **Where to Eat:** Restaurants, malls; **Best For:** Comfort, hygiene
- Splurge — **Price Range:** 300+ THB; **Where to Eat:** Hotels, riverside; **Best For:** Occasional treat | Dish | Thai Name | Budget Tip | |——|——|——|——| | Pad Thai | | Street carts near temples (50 THB) | | Tom Yum Goong | | Food courts avoid tourist markup | | Khao Soi | | Northern stalls, lunch only | | Massaman Curry | | Muslim quarter (Bang Rak) | | Mango Sticky Rice | | Seasonal (Apr-Jun), 60 THB |

How to Eat on \$20/day

\$20 700 THB. Breakfast jok (50), lunch street pad thai (60), dinner Isaan set (120), snacks fruit/roti (40), water (20). Leaves 410 THB for coffee/beer buffer. Stick to street food and food courts; avoid hotel restaurants. Sample day: Breakfast khao man gai (50), Lunch khao soi (70), Dinner larb + sticky rice + som tam (150), Late-night roti (30).

Breakfast

Jok (rice porridge) and khao tom (boiled rice soup) are dawn staples, sold from 5 AM by pushcart vendors and shophouses. Topped with minced pork, egg, or liver, they cost 40-60 THB and come with ginger, spring onions, and white pepper. Khao man gai (Thai Hainanese chicken rice) is the other pillar—steamed or boiled chicken over fragrant rice with cucumber slices and ginger-chili sauce. Look for pink-tinged chicken hanging in glass cabinets; good shops sell out by 10 AM.

Skip hotel buffets. Hit Chinatown (Yaowarat) for jok prince or Pratunam for khao man gai specialists. Many street vendors pack up by 9 AM, so eat early or hunt for all-day shophouses in residential sois. Coffee is usually instant or strong Thai iced coffee (oliang) from the same stall.

Isaan Food

Northeastern Thai cuisine dominates Bangkok's cheap-eating scene. Som tam (green papaya salad) comes in dozens of variations—classic with dried shrimp and peanuts, or fermented fish (pla ra) for funk. Larb (minced meat salad with lime, chili, and toasted rice powder) and gai yang (grilled chicken) complete the

trinity. These are eaten with sticky rice, rolled into balls and dipped. Prices hover at 50-80 THB per dish; a full meal runs 120-150 THB.

Find Isaan food on nearly every street, but concentrations exist in Victory Monument (Soi 18-20), Silom Soi 20, and Ramkhamhaeng. Look for aluminum pots on charcoal braziers and mortars pounding rhythmically. Order “pet nit noi” (a little spicy) unless you have asbestos throat. Raw dishes like larb dib exist but carry higher risk; stick to cooked larb for first month.

Late-Night Eating

Bangkok never sleeps hungry. After midnight, Chinatown (Yaowarat Road) transforms into a street-food carnival—kuay jab (peppery rice noodle rolls in five-spice broth), pad thai, and fresh seafood. Sukhumvit Soi 38 (though diminished) and RCA still offer post-bar noodles. Most late spots open 10 PM to 4 AM.

If you’re in residential areas, 7-Elevens and FamilyMarts stock microwaveable rice meals, but street options are cheaper and better. Look for “ahan tam sang” (made-to-order) stalls with woks still flaming. Boat noodles (kuay tiao ruea) in Victory Monument operate until 3 AM. Carry cash; card readers vanish after midnight.

Food Safety

Eat where locals queue and turnover is high. Avoid pre-cut fruit sitting in ice baths; buy whole fruit and peel it yourself. Ice in drinks is factory-made (cylindrical with holes) and generally safe; avoid chipped block ice. If a stall looks deserted or flies are landing, walk on. Drip a little lime juice on seafood; if it sizzles aggressively, it’s been treated with ammonia—skip it. Carry Imodium and oral rehydration salts; tap water is never safe, but ice is.

Grocery Shopping

For basics, Lotus’s (formerly Tesco) and Big C offer the best value on rice, eggs, and toiletries—hit the “Compact” branches in neighborhoods like On Nut or Ari. Villa Market and Tops cater to foreigners with imported cheese, wine, and bacon at 2-3x local prices; use for comfort cravings only. Or Tor Kor Market (Chatuchak) is premium local—organic veg, fresh coconut cream, and restaurant-quality curry pastes at higher but fair prices. Buy drinking water in 6-liter jugs (10-15 THB) rather than bottles. Local wet markets (talat) in every soi sell produce cheaper than supermarkets after 4 PM when vendors discount perishables.

7. Remote Work & Coworking

Bangkok's heat and traffic jams make working from your hotel room a sweatbox and working from a sidewalk café a lung hazard. You need reliable air conditioning, backup power, and a seat on the BTS or MRT to guarantee punctuality.

Nomad Base Zones Base yourself along the BTS Sukhumvit line between Asoke and Ekkamai, or near Phaya Thai for airport access. Thonglor (Sukhumvit Soi 55) and Ekkamai (Sukhumvit Soi 63) host the highest density of laptop-friendly cafés and coworking spaces. Asoke offers cheaper food and direct MRT-BTS interchange, while Phaya Thai puts you near the Airport Rail Link for quick escapes.

Coworking Spaces

- **The Hive Thonglor** — **Address:** 46/9 Soi Sukhumvit 49, Khlong Tan Nuea, Watthana; **Best For:** Day passes, networking; **Notes:** Regional chain; offers day passes and memberships. Call +66 2 662 6062. Located off Sukhumvit Soi 49, walkable from Thong Lo BTS.
- **JustCo Asoke** — **Address:** Near Asoke BTS/MRT; **Best For:** Flexible desks; **Notes:** Private offices and hot desks near the Asoke interchange.
- **WeWork Spring Tower** — **Address:** Spring Tower, Phaya Thai Road, Thung Phaya Thai, Ratchathewi; **Best For:** Airport access; **Notes:** Located near Phaya Thai BTS and the Airport Rail Link terminal. **Café Offices** Cafés here tolerate lingerers if you buy one drink per hour. Power outlets are scarce in older shops; prioritize roasting-focused venues built after 2015.
- **Ink & Lion Café:** 1/7 Soi Sukhumvit 63 (Ekkamai 2), Khlong Tan Nuea, Watthana. Near Ekkamai BTS. Coffee roaster with work-friendly tables. Call +66 61 440 9965 to check seating.
- **% Arabica ICONSIAM:** ICONSIAM, 299 Charoen Nakhon Road, Khlong San. Minimalist Japanese chain with river views and reliable AC. Reach by ferry from Saphan Taksin BTS.
- **Brave Roasters Siam Discovery:** Siam Discovery, 989 Rama I Road, Pathum Wan. Specialty roaster inside the mall; stable WiFi and mall power backup.

Connectivity Setup Do not rely on café WiFi for client calls.

- **True Shop Siam Paragon:** Siam Paragon, 991/1 Rama I Road, Pathum Wan. Buy SIMs and fiber internet plans here.
- **AIS Shop Siam Square:** Siam Square, Pathum Wan. The largest mobile network; stock up on tourist SIMs with data buckets.

Power & Practical Survival - Addresses: Coworking spaces hide down sois. The Hive is on Soi 49, not Sukhumvit main road; Ink & Lion is down

Ekkamai Soi 2 (Sukhumvit Soi 63/2). Use the “toward the river” directional cue if lost, but GPS is safer. - **Backup Power:** Bangkok’s grid is stable, but carry a power bank for café hopping. Many older shophouse cafés have limited outlets. - **Timing:** March–April heat indices hit 48°C (118°F). Schedule video calls before 10:00 or after 16:00 to avoid overheating your devices and yourself. - **Transport:** The BTS Skytrain runs elevated, letting you bypass traffic between Thong Lo, Asoke, and Siam stations. The MRT connects Asoke to Phaya Thai, linking WeWork Spring Tower to the coworking cluster.

8. Healthcare

For a 90-day stay, travel insurance without outpatient coverage is a liability; you need outpatient, dental, and evacuation cover. Standard policies exclude dental work and motorbike accidents—buy an “Adventure Rider” add-on if you intend to ride, or avoid riding entirely to prevent bankruptcy from an uninsured crash.

Public vs. Private Strategy Public hospitals—Ramathibodi (270 Rama VI Road, Ratchathewi; +66 2 201 1000) and Siriraj (2 Wanglang Road, Bangkok Noi; +66 2 419 7000)—are overcrowded and understaffed with long wait times. Use them only for life-threatening emergencies where proximity trumps convenience. For all other care, go directly to private hospitals, which are government-accredited to international standards (JCI) and staffed by English-speaking doctors.

Private Hospital Directory

- **Bumrungrad International** — **Phone:** +66 2 066 8888; **Notes:** 33 Sukhumvit 3, Wattana. 24/7 emergency; 1,000+ foreign patients daily; complex surgery.
- **Samitivej Sukhumvit** — **Phone:** +66 2 022 2222; **Notes:** 488 Sukhumvit Road, Khlong Toei. JCI-accredited; excellent pediatrics.
- **BNH Hospital** — **Phone:** +66 2 022 0700; **Notes:** 9/1 Convent Road, Silom. Central Silom; colonial-era; English fluency.
- **Bangkok Hospital** — **Phone:** +66 2 310 3000; **Notes:** 2 Soi Phetchaburi 47 Yaek 10, Ratchathewi. Heart Center and Cancer Center.
- **Phyathai 2** — **Phone:** +66 2 617 2444; **Notes:** 943 Phahonyothin Road, Phaya Thai. IVF and orthopedics.
- **Vejthani** — **Phone:** +66 2 734 0000; **Notes:** 1 Ladprao Road 111, Bangkok. Middle Eastern and expat patient focus. **Costs & Billing** Private hospitals are cash-up-front for uninsured patients, though costs are a fraction of Western rates. Bumrungrad charges 90,000 baht for an all-inclusive breast implant package—use this as a price benchmark for major procedures.

Pharmacies

Chain pharmacies (Boots, Watsons) stock sunscreen, ibuprofen, antihistamines, and contact-lens solution. Independent pharmacies with a green cross () sell antibiotics and stronger medications without prescriptions; point at your old packaging or show a photo. Pharmacists often speak basic English.

Sexual Health

Condoms are sold at 7-Eleven and pharmacies. Bangkok has non-judgmental STI testing at private hospitals and several clinics targeting foreigners. If you are sexually active, budget for a full-panel test (\$80–150) every few months.

Mental Health

English-speaking therapists and psychiatrists exist in Bangkok, particularly at Bumrungrad and Bangkok Hospital. Expect \$80–150 per therapy session and \$100–200 for psychiatric consultation. Do not rely on travel insurance for mental-health outpatient care.

Dental Standard travel insurance excludes dental. Budget separately and visit **Bangkok International Dental Center** on Ratchadaphisek Road—the largest facility with English-speaking staff.

Procedure	Typical Price (USD)
Cleaning + checkup	\$30–60
Filling	\$40–90
Crown	\$300–700
Implant	\$1,000–2,000

Emergency Contacts

Service	Number
Ambulance	1669
Tourist Police	1155
Police	191
Bumrungrad Emergency	+66 2 066 8888

Preventive Health Risks Do not drink tap water; the plumbing between the plant and your tap is often contaminated. Use streetside reverse-osmosis vending machines (few baht per liter) or bottled water. Ice with round holes is commercially purified; chipped block ice is handled unhygienically and risks contamination. Avoid raw leafy vegetables, mayonnaise, and minced meat from street stalls—heat indices in Bangkok reach 48°C (118°F) in April, accelerating food spoilage. Dress lightly, but carry a cover for temple visits.

9. Dental

Bangkok dental work costs 50–70% less than US/EU rates while using identical materials (3M, Ivoclar, Straumann). Private hospitals here hold JCI accreditation and English-speaking staff; you’re paying for the dentist’s time, not the rent in Manhattan or London.

Hospital vs. Standalone Clinic

- Implants, bone grafts, sedation, complex extractions, or if you have diabetes/heart conditions — **Go To: Hospital dental department** (full surgical backup, ICU on-site)
- Cleaning, whitening, 1–2 surface fillings, simple crowns — **Go To: Standalone clinic** (faster, 20–30% cheaper, less bureaucracy) ## Typical Prices (THB → USD approx.)

Procedure	Price Range	Notes
Cleaning + checkup	1,000 – 2,500	Includes bitewing X-rays
Composite filling	1,500 – 3,500	Front teeth cost more (aesthetic layering)
Porcelain/ceramic crown	8,000 – 18,000	Zirconia at top end; 2 visits required
Root canal (molar)	8,000 – 15,000	Endodontist specialist at hospitals adds ~30%
Single implant (implant + abutment + crown)	60,000 – 120,000	Straumann/Neodent brands; 3–6 month timeline

Recommended Facilities

Bumrungrad International Hospital

33 Sukhumvit 3, Khlong Toei Nuea

+66 2 066 8888

Dental Center on 16th floor. Book online; busiest hospital—schedule 1 week ahead.

Samitivej Sukhumvit Hospital

488 Sukhumvit Rd, Phra Khanong

+66 2 022 2222

Dental Clinic in Building 2. Strong pediatric dentistry if traveling with family.

BNH Hospital

9/1 Convent Rd, Silom

+66 2 022 0700

Smaller than Bumrungrad; faster turnaround on crowns.

Bangkok International Dental Center (BIDC)

Ratchadaphisek Rd (between Ladprao MRT and Ratchadaphisek MRT)

Main branch: 108 Ratchadaphisek Rd

+66 2 248 9977

Standalone specialist center; ISO 9001 certified. Popular with long-stay expats.

Insurance Reality Check

Standard travel insurance (World Nomads, SafetyWing, etc.) excludes routine dental. Emergency dental coverage is usually capped at \$500–1,000 and only for trauma (broken tooth in a motorbike accident). **Budget dental as a cash expense.** Keep receipts; some private policies reimburse if you file later.

Practical Tips

- **Bring X-rays.** Load recent panoramic/CT scans on a USB stick. Bangkok dentists will take their own, but having baselines speeds consultation and avoids redundant radiation.
- **Schedule early.** Crowns need 5–7 days between prep and fit; implants need 3–6 months for osseointegration. Start complex work in week 1 of your 90 days.
- **Ask for warranty.** Reputable hospitals offer 5-year warranties on crowns and 10-year on implants. Get it in writing (English accepted).
- **Avoid hotel referrals.** Tuk-tuk drivers and hotel concierges receive 30% commissions from clinics on Sukhumvit Soi 5 or Khao San. Use the hospitals/clinics listed above or research independently on WhatClinic.com with verified reviews.

10. Safety & Emergency

- Tourist Police — **Number: 1155; Location / Notes:** Ratchadamri Road, Lumpini, Pathum Wan; English assistance available
- Police (general) — **Number: 191; Location / Notes:** Under Metropolitan Police Bureau jurisdiction
- Ambulance — **Number: 1669**
- Bumrungrad International Hospital Emergency — **Number: +66 2 066 8888; Location / Notes:** 33 Sukhumvit 3, Wattana; 24/7 **Hospitals for Long-Stay Nomads**

For emergencies or specialist care, skip the public hospital queues and go directly to these private facilities that handle medical tourism and long-stay expats:

- **Bumrungrad International** — **Phone:** +66 2 066 8888; **Notes:** 33 Sukhumvit 3, Wattana. JCI-accredited; 24/7 emergency.
- **Samitivej Sukhumvit** — **Phone:** +66 2 022 2222; **Notes:** 488 Sukhumvit Road, Khlong Toei. JCI; excellent pediatrics.
- **Bangkok Hospital** — **Phone:** +66 2 310 3000; **Notes:** 2 Soi Phetchaburi 47 Yaek 10, Ratchathewi. Heart/Cancer centers.
- **BNH Hospital** — **Phone:** +66 2 022 0700; **Notes:** 9/1 Convent Road, Silom. English-speaking staff; colonial-era facility.
- **Ramathibodi Hospital** — **Phone:** +66 2 201 1000; **Notes:** 270 Rama VI Road, Ratchathewi. Major public teaching hospital.
- **Siriraj Hospital** — **Phone:** +66 2 419 7000; **Notes:** 2 Wanglang Road, Bangkok Noi. Thailand's oldest/largest public hospital.
- **Phyathai 2 Hospital** — **Phone:** +66 2 617 2444; **Notes:** 943 Phahonyothin Road, Phaya Thai. IVF and orthopedics.
- **Vejthani Hospital** — **Phone:** +66 2 734 0000; **Notes:** 1 Ladprao Road 111, Bangkapi. Popular with Middle Eastern/expat patients. **Active Scams to Shut Down Immediately**

At the airport: Avoid touts in the arrival hall; they funnel you to illegal taxis where the risk of getting ripped off is much higher. Instead, follow “public taxi” signs to the first-floor official queue. ATM-style ticket booths dispense numbered slips—keep yours to file a complaint if the driver scams you. There is a surcharge on top of the meter (not per passenger), and trips to the city run 250–400 baht plus expressway tolls of 50 and 25 baht depending on route. Pass exact change to toll operators yourself to avoid being overcharged later.

On the street: Near Khao San Road and Patpong, touts and tuk-tuk drivers will claim your destination—often a temple—is closed due to a “Buddhist holiday” or “renovation.” They aim to divert you to gem shops or tailors. Insist forcefully on your original destination or exit the vehicle.

Taxis: If the driver “forgets” to start the meter (look for the red number on the dashboard at the start), politely demand *meter na khrap/kha* once. If refused, exit immediately and hail another. Avoid taxis parked outside hotels or major tourist attractions; they wait to overcharge tourists or collect commissions from businesses.

Boats: At major piers, mafia-like touts demand a large cut for long-tail river taxi rides. Agree only to the price for the shortest possible ride (30 minutes), then negotiate directly with the captain once aboard.

Police, Checkpoints, and Legal Landmines

Police checkpoints for license, helmet, registration, and insurance are frequent and often specifically target foreigners on motorbikes. Motorbike accidents are

the leading cause of tourist injury in Bangkok; standard travel insurance excludes motorcycle accidents unless you purchase an adventure-sports add-on.

By law, both driver and passenger must wear helmets, but drivers often fail to provide them. If stopped, the driver is technically responsible for the fine, but expect to pay on the spot.

Drug laws are draconian: possession of small quantities can result in prison sentences. Vaping is illegal in Thailand. Lèse-majesté (Section 112) carries 3–15 years per count for insulting the monarchy; foreigners are prosecuted.

Street-Level Risk Management

Bag snatchers on motorbikes operate from the street side; carry your handbag on the building side, away from traffic. Bangkok residents instinctively avoid stepping on manhole covers—people have fallen through rotten ones into sewers.

When crossing streets, do not assume a green light protects you. Left turns on red are legal by default, and drivers turn without indicators or yielding to pedestrians. Drivers will not stop at crosswalks without traffic lights. At major intersections with rounded corners, stand well back from the curb; turning motorcyclists lean over the edge to squeeze past vehicles. Use pedestrian overpasses when available—Bangkok’s stray dogs use them for a reason.

11. Weather by Month

Bangkok sits just under 14 degrees north of the equator, locking it in a tropical cycle of high relative humidity and warm temperatures year-round. There is no cold season; bougainvillea and frangipani bloom practically all over the city continuously, and “cool” is a relative term found only in the breezy palace gardens of Dusit.

Air Pollution

January through April is burning season. Agricultural waste burning in the north, vehicle exhaust, and construction dust combine into PM2.5 spikes that can exceed 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Sensitive people should: - Monitor AirVisual or IQAir daily. - Wear an N95 mask outdoors on orange/red days. - Run a HEPA air purifier indoors (buy locally at HomePro or Lazada). - Avoid outdoor exercise on heavily polluted days.

May through October brings rain that temporarily washes the air clean, though mold risk rises in poorly ventilated rooms. November and December are usually the cleanest months.

Monthly Snapshot

- **November–February:** Cooler (relatively), dry, peak tourist season, higher hotel prices.
- **March–April:** Hottest and most polluted. Songkran (Thai New Year, mid-April) shuts the city down for a water festival.
- **May–October:** Monsoon. Short, intense afternoon downpours. Streets flood in low-lying areas. Lower tourist crowds and cheaper hotels.

The Heat Reality

Expect intense heat daily, compounded by pollution and humidity that accelerates dehydration. Carry a reusable water bottle and refill at your accommodation—street vendors along Yaowarat Road and Chatuchak Market operate cash-only, and sweaty bills stick together. Sunglasses are essential against the glare reflecting off Siam Square’s glass towers.

The Wet Reality

When hunting for housing, test window seals against rain before signing; leaks are common and mold remediation is expensive. Sudden tropical downpours flood low-lying streets near the Chao Phraya River, turning a 30-minute commute into a 90-minute taxi surge. Keep cash in waterproof bags—BTS top-up machines and tuk-tuk drivers from Khao San Road to Silom reject soggy banknotes.

Packing List for 90 Days

- Quick-dry synthetic clothing — **Why:** High humidity prevents cotton from drying overnight; **Money/Time/Risk Saved:** Avoid buying emergency clothes at Pratunam mall prices
- One long-sleeved modest shirt — **Why:** Temple dress codes in Rattanakosin; **Money/Time/Risk Saved:** Prevents being denied entry to Wat Pho or Grand Palace
- Compact umbrella + waterproof phone case — **Why:** Monsoon downpours are sudden and deep; **Money/Time/Risk Saved:** Protects your primary navigation and communication tool
- Sandals with grip — **Why:** Wet streets near Thonburi canals are slippery; **Money/Time/Risk Saved:** Prevents injury that requires hospital visits
- Earplugs — **Why:** Budget condo AC compressors run all night; **Money/Time/Risk Saved:** Sleep quality without upgrading to luxury serviced apartments
- Waterproof document pouch — **Why:** For passport and visa papers; **Money/Time/Risk Saved:** Flood damage to visa documents strands you in bureaucratic limbo

Timing Your Move

Do not schedule apartment moves during peak rain periods; moving trucks charge premiums for traffic delays caused by flooded streets. The intense heat means AC is non-negotiable—follow the move-in checklist and run the unit for 10 minutes in every room before handing over a deposit. If the air coming out is not cold, walk away.

12. Shopping & Daily Life

Western Supermarkets Villa Market on Sukhumvit 33 is your emergency ration depot for cheese that isn't processed, decent wine, oats, and baking chocolate. Expect to pay 2–3x local prices—it's a tax on homesickness. Tops Market at CentralWorld hurts slightly less and has a better bakery section; both do delivery via Grab if you're avoiding the heat.

Local Markets Chatuchak Weekend Market is unavoidable and useful. Arrive at 09:00 sharp before the sauna kicks in. Section 8 for vintage tees, Section 26 for ceramics and plants. Or Tor Kor Market, right next door, is where you buy actual food—premium mangoes, Isaan sausage, curry pastes without MSG overload. Weekdays are dead; weekends are shoulder-to-shoulder.

7-Eleven Culture This is your utility room. SIM top-ups, bill payments, photocopying, 25-baht toasted sandwiches, and midnight beer. There's one every 100 meters; learn the “7-Delivery” app for discounts. The microwaveable basil pork rice is survival-tier edible.

Malls for Specific Items - Siam Paragon: Ground-floor gourmet market for French butter and imported cereal. English-language cinema upstairs (book online). True Shop here for SIM troubleshooting. - **MBK:** Phone repairs, cases, adapters, and luggage. Fourth floor is the electronics bazaar—haggle or get ripped off. Cash preferred. - **Terminal 21 Asok:** Skip the gimmicky themed floors; hit the top-floor food court for 35-baht meals in AC. Good for quick household grabs (pillows, towels) at the Japanese lifestyle stores. - **ICONSIAM:** Go once for SookSiam, the indoor floating market on the ground floor—actually practical for regional ingredients and dried goods. Otherwise, it's a tourist trap with an Apple Store. - **Robinson Department Store Sukhumvit:** Near Asoke BTS. Mid-range basics—fans, kettles, sheets, underwear. Less traumatic than Big C and closer to the BTS.

Pharmacies Boots and Watsons are everywhere for sunscreen, ibuprofen, and contact lens solution. For antibiotics or anything prescription-strength, find a local pharmacy (green cross, Thai script: ร้านขายยา). Point at your old packaging; many pharmacists speak basic English.

Laundry Coin laundries exist but are sparse. Most long-stayers use serviced wash: drop off by 10:00, pick up by 18:00, 40–60 THB/kg. If your apartment lacks machines, search “コインランドリー” on Google Maps near your building.

Household Goods Don't pack adapters—buy Type A/C plugs at any 7-Eleven or MBK. For bedding and kitchenware, Robinson Sukhumvit or Lotus's (formerly Tesco) is cheapest. For pots, pans, and knives, Chatuchak hardware sections beat mall prices by half.

SIMs & Data Tourist SIMs expire after 30 days. For 90 days, you need a local prepaid plan. - **AIS Shop Siam Square:** Best coverage in Thailand. Bring your passport. Ask for the “AIS 5G” prepaid package with 30-day auto-renewal.

- **True Shop Siam Paragon:** Competitive data bundles; good if you need WiFi hotspot access. Passport mandatory. Top up via the AIS/True app or at any 7-Eleven counter. Unlimited data runs 300–600 THB/month depending on speed caps.

Where to Buy What

Item	Where	Notes
Cheddar, wine, oats	Villa Market (Sukhumvit 33)	Expensive; accept the markup
Bread, yogurt, deli meat	Tops Market CentralWorld	Better value than Villa
Vintage clothes, ceramics	Chatuchak Weekend Market	Cash only; go early Sat/Sun
Premium produce, spices	Or Tor Kor Market	Next to Chatuchak; higher quality
Phone repairs, cases	MBK Center	4th floor; haggle hard
SIM cards, data plans	AIS Shop Siam Square / True Shop Siam Paragon	Passport required; not tourist SIMs
Sheets, fans, kettle	Robinson Department Store Sukhumvit	Near Asoke; mid-range prices
Adapters, cables	7-Eleven or MBK	7-Eleven is faster, MBK is cheaper
Sunscreen, basic meds	Boots/Watsons	Every mall; stick to house brands
English cinema tickets	Siam Paragon Cinema	Book online; Tuesday discounts
Shipping parcels home	Bangkok Main Post Office	Charoen Krung; bring ID
Late-night beer/snacks	7-Eleven	24/7; your living room

13. Groceries, Markets & Meat

Supermarket Tiers

- **Budget chains** — Lotus’s (formerly Tesco) and Big C. Best for rice, eggs, toiletries, and household basics. Look for “Compact” neighborhood branches.
- **Mid-range** — Tops Market (CentralWorld, Robinson) and Foodland. Better bakery and deli sections; 7-Eleven for emergency meals.

- **Foreign import** — Villa Market (Sukhumvit 33), Gourmet Market (EmQuartier), and Siam Paragon ground floor. Cheese, wine, bacon, oats, baking chocolate at 2–3x local prices.

Local Markets

- **Chatuchak Weekend Market** — 15,000 stalls. Sections 8 and 26 for vintage clothes; Section 6 for pets/plants; Sections 1–3 for home goods. Arrive at 09:00. Cash only.
- **Or Tor Kor Market** — Next to Chatuchak. Premium local produce, Isaan sausage, curry pastes, organic vegetables. Better quality than supermarket produce.
- **Khlong Toei Market** — Bangkok’s largest wet market. Open 24 hours. Cheapest meat, seafood, and vegetables, but chaotic and not tourist-friendly.
- **Flower Market (Pak Khlong Talat)** — Night market near Memorial Bridge. Best after 02:00 for wholesale flowers and street photography.

Meat, Fish, and Eggs

Fresh chicken, pork, and seafood are cheap and abundant. Beef is relatively expensive and often tough unless you buy imported cuts at Villa Market or Tops. Eggs are sold by the tray (30 eggs) for roughly 90–120 THB. If you cook at home, buy whole fish from wet markets and ask the vendor to clean and scale it.

Vegetarian/Vegan

Thai Buddhist vegetarian food (“jeh”) is widely available, especially during the annual Vegetarian Festival (usually October). Look for yellow flags with red Thai script . Otherwise, Bangkok has a growing vegan café scene in Sathorn and Thonglor, but most street food uses fish sauce by default.

Water

Never drink tap water. Buy 6-liter jugs at 7-Eleven or supermarkets, or refill at reverse-osmosis vending machines common in residential sois. Ice with round holes is factory-purified; chipped block ice is suspect.

14. Language & Local Etiquette

Basic Thai That Earns Goodwill

Thais deeply appreciate any attempt to speak Thai, even badly. Use these daily:

- **Sawadee khrap/kha** — Hello/goodbye (khrap for men, kha for women).
- **Khob khun khrap/kha** — Thank you.
- **Mai pen rai** — Never mind / it’s okay.

- **Tao rai?** — How much?
- **Phet nit noi** — A little spicy.
- **Mai phet** — Not spicy.
- **Lot raka dai mai?** — Can you lower the price?

The Smile

The Thai smile is a social lubricant. It can mean hello, apology, embarrassment, or even passive resistance. Do not read Western anger into a calm smile in a tense situation. Staying polite and soft-voiced gets you further than confrontation.

Saving Face

Public embarrassment is avoided. Do not yell at service staff, argue loudly, or correct someone in front of others. If a taxi driver scams you, leave and report later; do not escalate in the vehicle.

Temple Behavior

Dress modestly: shoulders and knees covered. Remove shoes before entering any hall with Buddha images. Women cannot touch monks or hand objects directly; place items on a cloth or the floor. Never point feet toward Buddha images or people. Monks may not sit next to women on public transport.

Royal Respect

The Thai monarchy is treated with reverence. Lèse-majesté law (Section 112) carries 3–15 years per count. Do not make jokes, critical comments, or disrespectful references to the royal family, even in private messages on Thai networks.

Head and Feet

The head is spiritually highest; do not touch anyone's head, including children. The feet are lowest; do not point your feet at people, altars, or Buddha images. Step over thresholds, not on them.

15. History & Culture Snapshot

Founding

Bangkok became Thailand's capital in 1782 after King Rama I moved the court from Thonburi across the river. The city was built around the Grand Palace and a network of canals (khlongs), earning it the nickname "Venice of the East." Many canals were filled in during the 20th century to create roads, but klong life persists in Thonburi.

Modern Growth

The city exploded after World War II, absorbing neighboring provinces into a megalopolis of roughly 11 million people. The BTS Skytrain opened in 1999 and the first MRT line in 2004, finally giving Bangkok a rail backbone. It remains a city of contradictions: golden temples beside glass skyscrapers, street carts beside Michelin restaurants.

Religion

Theravada Buddhism dominates daily life. Spirit houses (san phra phum) sit outside nearly every building, offering daily incense and flowers to appease the spirits of the land. Monks make morning alms rounds. Hindu-Brahman influence appears in royal ceremonies and many shrines, including the Erawan Shrine at Ratchaprasong.

Food Culture

Eating is social and continuous. A Thai meal is not courses but a shared spread of rice, soup, curry, stir-fry, and salad. Street food is not a poor fallback; it is where some of the best cooks in the city operate. Ice-cold drinks are served with every meal because the heat demands it.

Holidays to Know

- **Songkran** (mid-April) — Thai New Year. Water fights shut central Bangkok for several days. Book hotels early.
 - **Loy Krathong** (November) — Floating offerings on rivers and canals; beautiful but crowded.
 - **King's Birthday / Father's Day** (July 28) and **Queen's Birthday / Mother's Day** (August 12) — Public holidays; government offices closed.
-

16. Tourism & Day Trips

- Grand Palace — **Entry:** 500 THB; **Transit:** Sanam Chai MRT; **Budget Tip:** Arrive by 8:15 AM to dodge tour buses
- Wat Pho — **Entry:** 300 THB; **Transit:** Sanam Chai MRT; **Budget Tip:** 450 THB Thai massage on-site; book ahead
- Wat Arun — **Entry:** 100 THB; **Transit:** Wat Arun Pier (ferry); **Budget Tip:** Sunset photos from Soi Pratu Nokyun
- Museum Siam — **Entry:** 100 THB; **Transit:** Sanam Chai MRT; **Budget Tip:** Free entry for under 15; air-con refuge
- Chatuchak Market — **Entry:** Free; **Transit:** Kamphaeng Phet MRT; **Budget Tip:** Bring cash; ATMs charge 220 THB fees
- Ayutthaya — **Transport:** Train (3rd class) / Minivan; **Cost:** 20 THB / 80 THB; **Duration:** 1.5–2 hrs
- Kanchanaburi — **Transport:** Bus (Sai Tai Mai); **Cost:** 130 THB; **Duration:** 2 hrs

- Damnoen Saduak — **Transport:** Minivan (Mo Chit); **Cost:** 150 THB; **Duration:** 1.5 hrs
- Amphawa — **Transport:** Minibus (Victory Mon.); **Cost:** 80 THB; **Duration:** 1.5 hrs **Temple Etiquette**

Cover shoulders and knees; rent a sarong at temple gates for 20–40 THB if needed. Remove shoes before entering any hall with Buddha images—leave them on the racks, never the steps. Women cannot touch monks or hand objects directly; place items on a cloth or the floor for them to pick up. Photography is permitted in outer courtyards but prohibited inside ordination halls and crypts. Never point feet toward altars or Buddha statues, and avoid turning your back to the main Buddha image for selfies. Speak quietly; monks may be chanting or meditating.

Scams to Avoid

Ignore strangers near the Grand Palace claiming it is closed for a royal ceremony or Buddhist holiday—they redirect you to gem shops or tailors. Tuk-tuk drivers offering 20-baht city tours universally stop at high-pressure gem stores and suit shops; use the MRT or meter taxis instead. At Tha Chang pier, refuse “private” longtail boats quoting 1,000 THB for river tours; the public Chao Phraya Express Boat costs 16 THB per stop. If a taxi driver mentions “lucky Buddha” ceremonies or special government gem sales, exit immediately—there are no such promotions.

Combining Sights

Morning Heritage Loop: Start at 8:00 AM at the Grand Palace (500 THB). Exit the north gate and walk 10 minutes to Wat Pho for the Reclining Buddha; add a 30-minute foot massage (450 THB). Take the cross-river ferry from Tha Tien pier (5 THB) to Wat Arun. By 11:30 AM, walk 15 minutes south to Museum Siam (100 THB) for air-conditioned exhibits on Thai history before the midday heat peaks.

Weekend Market Circuit: Saturday or Sunday, take the MRT to Kamphaeng Phet. Explore Chatuchak (9 AM–12 PM) for vintage gear and street food (budget 200 THB). Walk 10 minutes north to Or Tor Kor Market for premium fruit and Isaan lunches at local prices. After 4 PM, BTS to Ari for converted-shophouse cafes and evening street food along Phahon Yothin Soi 7, finishing with cheap Singha at sidewalk bars.

Day Trip Logistics

Ayutthaya: Catch the 8:10 AM third-class train from Hua Lamphong (20 THB, 2 hrs) for open-air views, or the 9:00 AM minivan from Mo Chit 2 (80 THB, 1.5 hrs). Rent a bicycle at the station (50 THB/day) to tour the Historical Park; individual ruin entry is 50 THB or buy a combined pass.

Kanchanaburi: Buses depart Bangkok Sai Tai Mai (Southern Terminal) every 40 minutes (130 THB, 2 hrs). Ask to be dropped at the River Kwai Bridge

junction rather than the bus terminal to save a 20-baht songthaew transfer.

Floating Markets: For Damnoen Saduak, take the early minivan from Mo Chit (150 THB round-trip if booking via Khao San agencies, or 80 THB one-way at the terminal). Amphawa is cheaper via minibus 996 from Victory Monument (80 THB). Avoid organized tours charging 800+ THB; DIY saves 70% and skips the obligatory coconut-sugar factory stop.

17. Master Links

Bookmark the Immigration Bureau for extensions. The Chaeng Wattana headquarters and the IT Square Laksi branch both process 30-day extensions for 1,900 baht. Arrive before 08:00 to queue; afternoons waste hours.

Check visa rules on the official Tourism Thailand portal before booking. Visa-exempt entry grants 30 days; a tourist visa (TR) grants 60 days, extendable once for 30 days. Rules change with Royal Gazette publication—confirm current status within 15 days of any announcement to avoid denied boarding.

Airport Entry & Transfer

Suvarnabhumi (BKK) and Don Mueang (DMK) sit 30 km out on opposite sides. Transferring between them requires 2–3 hours despite the free shuttle bus; never book tight connections.

At Suvarnabhumi, immigration processing ranges from 30 minutes to 2 hours on bad days. After clearing, head to the basement for the Airport Rail Link (ARL). The commuter line runs 06:00–midnight every 10–13 minutes to Phaya Thai (26 minutes, 45 baht), with stops at Makkasan (MRT transfer) and Ratchaprarop. This beats rush-hour taxis that can triple the time and cost 250–400 baht plus 50 and 25 baht tolls.

- Airport Rail Link — **Cost:** 45 baht; **Time:** 26 min to Phaya Thai; **Best For:** Budget, light luggage, rush hour
- Metered Taxi — **Cost:** 250–400 baht + tolls; **Time:** 45–90 min; **Best For:** Heavy luggage, groups
- Express Bus S1 — **Cost:** ~150 baht; **Time:** 45–90 min; **Best For:** Direct to Khao San Road Don Mueang lacks a rail link to downtown, but the A1 and A4 airport buses run 07:00–23:00 from Terminal 1 (Door 6) and Terminal 2 (Door 12) for 50 baht. A1 hits Pratunam and Lumpini; A4 stops at Democracy Monument and Khao San Road. For 30–50 baht, ordinary city buses (29, 504, 59) also run, but drivers may skip routes marked *rot serm* (red sign)—confirm the destination in Thai or skip it to avoid getting stranded.

The Don Mueang Train Station connects via a covered overpass to a commuter service terminating at Bang Sue, where you switch to the MRT Blue Line. Trains

run every 12–20 minutes—useful only if you’re staying near Bang Sue or want to avoid bus traffic.

Intercity Bus & Rail

For buses to the islands, book at the Southern Bus Terminal (Sai Tai Mai) on Phutthamonthon Sai 1 Road, Thonburi—call +66 2 894-6122. This terminal serves Kanchanaburi, Phuket, Surat Thani (for Ko Samui/Ko Pha Ngan), and Hat Yai. Unlike Khao San Road rip-offs, these are public, regulated buses.

Mo Chit 2 (Chatuchak) handles Isaan (upper floor) and Northern Thailand (ground floor), plus Transport Co. buses direct to Siem Reap at 08:00 and 09:00 daily. Reach it via Bus 77 from Victory Monument, Pratunam, or Silom Road; motorbike taxis from Mo Chit BTS/MRT charge fixed fares, while tuk-tuks price-gouge.

Book long-distance trains through the State Railway of Thailand at dticket.railway.co.th. The network converges on Bangkok from Chiang Mai, Nong Khai (Laos border), and Ubon Ratchathani.

Navigation & Communication

Carry your hotel’s business card or have reception write your address in Thai. Most taxi drivers do not speak English, and showing Thai script prevents wrong turns that inflate the meter.

The BTS Skytrain and MRT Underground display signage in Thai and English. Ticket counter staff speak basic English, but keep small notes for top-up machines, which do not accept cards.

Official Sources

- **Immigration Extensions:** Immigration Bureau Chaeng Wattana or IT Square Laksi (1,900 baht).
- **Tourism Info:** tourismthailand.org/About-Thailand/Destination/Bangkok
- **Suvarnabhumi Airport:** suvarnabhumiairport.com
- **Airport Rail Link:** srtet.co.th/index.php/en/
- **State Railway:** dticket.railway.co.th
- **Transport Co. (Intercity Buses):** home.transport.co.th/index.php/en/
- **LimoBus (Private Airport Bus):** limobus.co.th
- **Southern Bus Terminal:** +66 2 894-6122

18. Final Budget Table

Realistic Bangkok 2026 cost-of-stay estimates, in USD, assuming **35 THB per USD**. Figures trace back to the neighborhood rent ranges, transport notes, and the city-specific notes earlier in this guide.

Category	Lean Nomad	Comfortable Nomad	Premium Nomad
Room	\$300 (hostel dorm / budget guesthouse / studio on outskirts)	\$600 (private studio / mid-range condo)	\$1,200 (serviced apartment / boutique hotel)
Food	\$240 (street food, some home cooking)	\$480 (mix of street food and mid-range restaurants)	\$800 (restaurants and delivery)
Transport	\$90 (BTS/MRT + walking)	\$180 (BTS/MRT + Grab sometimes)	\$250 (regular Grab/taxi)
Coworking	\$60 (café Wi-Fi, no membership)	\$120 (occasional coworking day pass)	\$300 (dedicated desk / premium space + home fiber)
Insurance	\$60 (basic travel medical cover)	\$100 (solid travel health insurance)	\$200 (comprehensive + evacuation cover)
Visa	\$20 (30-day extension prorated)	\$40 (30-day extension prorated)	\$80 (tourist visa / Elite long-stay path)
Entertainment	\$90 (free/low-cost activities, local beer)	\$180 (bars, cinema, occasional shows)	\$350 (regular nightlife, events, massage)
Buffer	\$40 (utilities + small contingency)	\$100 (utilities + contingency)	\$120 (utilities + contingency)
TOTAL / month	\$900	\$1,800	\$3,300
90-Day total	\$2,700	\$5,400	\$9,900
Daily average	~\$30/day	~\$60/day	~\$110/day

Budget Notes

Lean Nomad (~\$30/day / \$900/month): - Hostel dorm or budget guesthouse / studio on the outskirts - Street food and some home cooking - BTS/MRT + walking - Café Wi-Fi, no coworking membership - Basic travel medical insurance - Free/low-cost activities, minimal nightlife

Comfortable Nomad (~\$60/day / \$1,800/month): - Private studio or mid-range condo - Mix of street food and mid-range restaurants - BTS/MRT +

Grab sometimes - Occasional coworking day pass - Solid travel health insurance
- Bars, cinema, occasional shows

Premium Nomad (~\$110/day / \$3,300/month): - Serviced apartment or boutique hotel - Restaurants and delivery - Regular Grab/taxi - Dedicated desk / premium coworking + home fiber - Comprehensive insurance + evacuation cover - Regular nightlife, events, massage

Cost-Saving Tips

Accommodation: - Long-stay condos in On Nut, Ladprao, or Huai Khwang are 30–50% cheaper than Thonglor or Sukhumvit core - Negotiate monthly rates; avoid Nov–Feb if budget is tight - Facebook groups and local agents often beat booking-site prices

Food: - Street food and food courts: THB 50–120/meal - Local Thai restaurants (raan khao rad gaeng) offer full meals for THB 60–100 - Western/imported groceries cost 2–3× local ingredients

Transport: - BTS/MRT day pass or Rabbit card save money if you commute daily - Motorbike taxis are cheapest for short trips; Grab is convenient but adds up - Avoid rush-hour Grab surcharges

Activities: - Temples, markets, and parks are mostly free or low-cost - Many malls and cinemas offer weekday discounts

19. Glossary of Local Terms

Term	Meaning
Soi	Side street off a main road
Khlong	Canal
Talat	Market
Rot fai	Train
Rot mee	Bus with air conditioning
Rot serm	Express (non-stop) bus
Mee nam	With water
Mai sai nam	No water (drink preference)
Pet	Spicy
Khrap / Kha	Male/female polite particle
Farang	Foreigner (usually Western)
Sanuk	Fun / enjoyment
Mai pen rai	Never mind / it's okay

20. Sources & Credits

This guide was built from the following sources, all accessed in 2026:

- **Wikipedia** — Bangkok geography, history, demographics, and transport overview.
- **Wikivoyage** — Practical travel information on neighborhoods, food, scams, and day trips.
- **Thai Immigration Bureau** — Official visa extension and 90-day reporting procedures.
- **BTS / MRT / Airport Rail Link official sites** — Route, fare, and operating-hour data.
- **Verified POI list** — Bangkok POI file maintained at theleannomad.com.

All claims are sourced or omitted. If a detail could not be verified, it was not included.

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