

Pattaya, Thailand — 90-Day Survival Guide

For The Lean Nomad — Built 2026-07-07

How to Use This Guide

Use this guide as a single reference document for a 90-day stay in Pattaya. Every named place, neighborhood, and category is individually profiled. Facts are sourced from Wikipedia, Wikivoyage, and verified POI data. This is encyclopedia-depth — not a starter checklist.

0. City Overview & Quick Facts

The Hard Numbers

Fact	Detail
Population	116,417 (registered), 351,391 urban, 999,092 metro
Metro Area	Eastern Gulf Coast, Chonburi Province
Coordinates	12°56 09 N 100°53 20 E
Elevation	Sea level (coastal)
Language	Thai (official), English widely spoken in tourist areas
Currency	Thai baht (THB)
Timezone	UTC+7 (Indochina Time)
Calling Code	+66 (country); 038 (Pattaya area)
Climate Classification	Tropical savanna (Aw)

What This City Actually Is

Pattaya is a seaside resort city on the Eastern Gulf Coast of Thailand, about 150km southeast of Bangkok. It's infamous for its go-go bars and nightlife, but also attracts millions of domestic and international tourists for its beaches, restaurants, and family-friendly attractions. The city occupies most of the coastline of Bang Lamung District in Chonburi Province.

Local authorities have made efforts to improve beach quality and add family attractions, though the sex industry remains visible. The population is a colorful mix of nationalities — Thai, Russian, European, Indian, and Chinese expats all maintain communities here.

On weekends and holidays, Pattaya Beach is crowded with domestic visitors from Bangkok and surrounding areas — many are day-trippers. The daytime can feel chaotic during these periods, but nights run as usual.

Named Places Profiled

Neighborhoods

- **Central Pattaya / Beach Road** — Dense tourist core with hotels, malls, and nightlife. This is where most first-time visitors plant themselves. Beach Road runs parallel to the shoreline and is one-way southbound during daytime hours.
- **South Pattaya / Walking Street** — The nightlife epicenter. Walking Street closes to vehicles evenings (18:00-02:00) and becomes a pedestrian neon canyon of bars, clubs, and restaurants. Bali Hai Pier sits at the southern end.
- **Pratumnak Hill** — Hillside area between Pattaya and Jomtien. Quieter than central Pattaya, popular with long-stay expats for its condo complexes and sea views. Requires songthaew or motorbike to reach central areas.
- **Naklua / Wong Amat** — Residential area north of central Pattaya. Wong Amat Beach is cleaner and quieter than main Pattaya Beach. Popular with families and long-term expats seeking a calmer base.
- **Jomtien** — Longer beach south of Pattaya proper (covered in separate Wikivoyage article). Cheaper condos, family vibe, better beach conditions. Connected by songthaew from central Pattaya.
- **East Pattaya / Inland** — Residential Thai areas behind the coastal strip. Lower-cost rentals but requires motorbike or car for beach access. Authentic local food, fewer tourists.

1. Landing — First 72 Hours

Airport Options

You're likely flying into one of two airports:

Airport	Code	Distance	Transfer Time	Best For
Suvarnabhumi (BKK)	BKK	~120km	1.5–2 hours	International flights, more airline options
U-Tapao (UTP)	UTP	~45km	45 minutes	Regional flights, closer but fewer connections

From Suvarnabhumi Airport

Bus: The Bell Travel Service and airport buses run from Suvarnabhumi to Pattaya. Buses depart roughly hourly from 07:00–21:00. Cost: ~THB 130–150. Drops at various points including Central Festival Pattaya and North Pattaya.

Private taxi: Metered taxis from Suvarnabhumi cost THB 1,000–1,500 including tolls. Insist on meter use. Touts in the arrivals hall will quote THB 2,000+ — walk to the official taxi desk on Level 1.

Grab: Available from Suvarnabhumi. App-priced, typically THB 800–1,200 depending on demand. Designated pickup point at the airport.

From U-Tapao Airport

Taxi: Fixed counter price ~THB 1,200–1,500 to central Pattaya. No meter.

Minibus: Shared vans available, ~THB 200–300 per person. Wait for full load before departing.

Grab: Limited availability from U-Tapao. Check app before landing.

Money Out of the Gate

Currency is the **Thai baht (THB)**. Exchange counters operate at both airports, but rates are poor. Change only enough for immediate transport (THB 500–1,000), then hit proper bank ATMs or exchange booths in Pattaya.

ATMs are everywhere in Pattaya — every 7-Eleven has one, and they cluster around Beach Road, Central Pattaya, and all major malls. Foreign card withdrawal fee: THB 220 per transaction (standard across Thailand). Bring a card that reimburses ATM fees or withdraw larger amounts less frequently.

Where to Plant Yourself First

For first-timers: Stay near **Beach Road** or **Soi Buakhao** for your first 72 hours. Both put you within walking distance of restaurants, 7-Elevens, and songthaew routes. You can figure out the city before committing to a monthly rental.

For long-stay reconnaissance: Use your first 3 days to scout neighborhoods. Ride songthaews (THB 10–30 per trip) to Naklua, Pratumnak, and Jomtien. Talk to expats at coworking spaces and coffee shops. Facebook groups like “Pattaya Expats Club” have rental listings that never hit Agoda.

Getting Around Immediately

Mode	Fare	Availability	What to Know
Songthaew (baht bus)	THB 10–30	06:00–02:00	Shared pickup trucks on fixed routes. Wave to stop. Tell driver your destination before boarding.
Grab	App-priced	24 hours	Reliable, no haggling. Good for airport runs and late nights when songthaews stop.
Motorbike taxi	THB 40–100	06:00–22:00	Stand at street corners with colored vests. Faster than taxis in traffic. Helmet optional for passengers (not recommended).
Taxi	Meter or negotiated	Sporadic	Rarely use meter in Pattaya. Negotiate before boarding. Starting rate ~THB 100 for short trips.
Motorbike rental	THB 200–350/day	Everywhere	Requires passport deposit or cash bond. International Driving Permit technically required. Police checkpoints target foreigners.

The songthaew circuit: Beach Road runs southbound, Second Road runs northbound. This is the main loop. To cross east-west, use North/Central/South Pattaya Roads. Tell the driver your destination — they'll shout when you're near.

2. Visa & Immigration

Visa-Free Entry

Most Western passport holders receive **30 days visa-free** when arriving by air. Land entries grant 15 days. This can be extended once for 30 days at the local immigration office.

Visa Extension Process

Pattaya Immigration Office - Address: Soi 5, Moo 12, Jomtien Beach Road, Nongprue, Banglamung, Chonburi 20150 - **Phone:** +66 38 252 750 - **Hours:** Monday–Friday 08:30–11:30, 13:00–16:30 (closed weekends and Thai holidays) - **Cost:** THB 1,900 for 30-day extension

Documents required: - Passport (valid 6+ months) - Copy of passport bio page and visa stamp - TM.7 application form (available at immigration) - One 4×6cm photo (taken within 6 months) - Proof of address (rental contract or hotel booking) - Flight ticket (sometimes requested)

Process: Arrive early (07:30–08:00) to avoid crowds. Take a number. Fill out TM.7 form at the counter. Submit documents. Pay fee. Return in 5–7 days for passport with extension stamp.

Long-Stay Visa Options

Tourist Visa (TR): Apply at Thai embassy before travel. Grants 60 days, extendable by 30 days. Cost varies by country (~\$40–80 USD).

Elite Visa: 5–20 year membership program. Costs THB 600,000–2,000,000+. Includes airport fast-track, concierge services. Overkill for 90-day stays.

Education Visa: Thai language schools offer 6–12 month student visas. Costs THB 30,000–60,000/year. Requires regular class attendance. Crackdowns have increased — ensure school is legitimate.

Retirement Visa (Non-O): For ages 50+. Requires THB 800,000 in Thai bank account or THB 65,000/month income. Convertible from tourist visa inside Thailand.

Work Permit: Requires Thai employer sponsorship. Most digital nomads work remotely on tourist entries — technically gray area but widely practiced.

Overstay Penalties

- **THB 500 per day** up to 90 days
- **Arrest and deportation** for overstays over 90 days
- **Re-entry ban** possible for extended overstays

Do not overstay. Immigration systems are computerized and track entries/exits.

3. Money & Banking

ATM Networks

All major Thai banks operate ATMs in Pattaya. Foreign cards work universally.

Bank	ATM Locations	Notes
Bangkok Bank	Beach Road, Central Festival, North Pattaya	Largest network, English menus
Kasikorn Bank	Everywhere	Green branding, reliable
(K-Bank)		
Siam Commercial Bank (SCB)	Malls, tourist areas	Purple branding
Krung Thai Bank	Government areas, markets	Blue branding

Fee: THB 220 per withdrawal (all banks). Withdraw maximum amounts (usually THB 20,000–30,000 per transaction) to minimize fee impact.

Card Acceptance

Venue Type	Card Acceptance	Cash Needed
7-Eleven / FamilyMart	Yes (THB 50+ purchases)	Small purchases
Supermarkets (Big C, Lotus's)	Yes	None
Shopping malls	Yes	None
Restaurants (mid-range+)	Yes	Street food only
Street food / markets	No	Always
Songthaews / motorbike taxis	No	Always
Hotels / guesthouses	Yes (most)	Some budget places cash-only

Wise / Revolut: Both work at Thai ATMs. Wise offers better exchange rates than direct bank withdrawals. Load baht into Wise app before arrival for instant ATM access.

Opening a Local Account

Possible but requires documentation:

- **Tourist visa:** Generally not allowed
- **Non-Immigrant visa:** Possible with work permit or retirement visa
- **Elite visa:** Yes, with membership card

Bangkok Bank is most foreigner-friendly. Minimum deposit: THB 1,000–5,000. ATM card issued same-day or within 1 week.

Currency Exchange

Avoid: Airport booths, hotel exchange counters (poor rates)

Use: SuperRich (orange/green booths), exchange booths in Central Festival/Terminal 21, bank branches

Current rates (2026): ~THB 35–36 per USD, ~THB 40–42 per EUR. Check SuperRich website before exchanging.

4. Neighborhoods & Housing

Neighborhood Profiles

Central Pattaya / Beach Road

Vibe: Tourist central, chaotic, convenient **Rent range:** THB 15,000–35,000/month (1-bed condo) **Best for:** First-time visitors, nightlife access, walkable lifestyle **Not ideal for:** Quiet seekers, families, long-term budget stays

Beach Road is the spine of Pattaya. Everything is walkable — malls, restaurants, bars, the beach itself. Condos here are older but well-maintained. Noise is constant; request high floors and seaward units for better sleep.

South Pattaya / Walking Street

Vibe: Nightlife epicenter, neon-soaked, loud **Rent range:** THB 12,000–25,000/month (studio/1-bed) **Best for:** Party-focused stays, short-term visitors **Not ideal for:** Anyone seeking quiet, families, remote workers needing focus

Walking Street closes to traffic evenings (18:00–02:00). Living here means constant foot traffic, music, and street vendors. Soi 13–16 offer slightly quieter side streets while remaining central.

Pratumnak Hill

Vibe: Expat residential, hillside views, quieter **Rent range:** THB 18,000–40,000/month (1–2 bed condo) **Best for:** Long-stay expats, couples, remote workers **Not ideal for:** Nightlife seekers, budget travelers, those without motorbike

Pratumnak sits between Pattaya and Jomtien. The hill offers sea views and cooler evening breezes. Condos are newer with pools and gyms. Songthaews run regularly but less frequently than Beach Road.

Naklua / Wong Amat

Vibe: Residential, family-friendly, cleaner beaches **Rent range:** THB 15,000–30,000/month (1-bed) **Best for:** Families, long-term expats, beach lovers **Not ideal for:** Nightlife access, walkable lifestyle

Naklua is north of central Pattaya. Wong Amat Beach is the cleanest in the area. Local markets, fewer tourists. Requires songthaew or motorbike for central Pattaya access.

Jomtien

Vibe: Laid-back, expat-heavy, beach-focused **Rent range:** THB 10,000–25,000/month (1-bed) **Best for:** Long stays, families, beach lifestyle, budget-conscious **Not ideal for:** Nightlife, walkable access to central Pattaya

Jomtien Beach is broader and cleaner than Pattaya Beach. The area has its own ecosystem — malls, restaurants, bars — reducing need for central trips. Songthaews to Pattaya run every 10–15 minutes (THB 10–20, 15 minutes).

East Pattaya / Inland

Vibe: Authentic Thai, residential, cheap **Rent range:** THB 6,000–15,000/month (1-bed house/condo) **Best for:** Budget long-stays, cultural immersion, Thai language learners **Not ideal for:** Beach access, walkable lifestyle, English speakers

Behind the coastal strip lies real Thai Pattaya. Local markets, street food, minimal tourists. Requires motorbike for beach/central access. Best for experienced Thailand hands.

Finding Monthly Housing

Online platforms: - Agoda Homes (verified listings, booking protection) - Booking.com (some monthly options) - Facebook: “Pattaya Expats Club,” “Pattaya Property For Rent”

Walk-in method: 1. Pick neighborhood 2. Walk streets looking for “For Rent” signs (Thai:) 3. Call numbers on signs (many landlords don’t list online) 4. Negotiate directly (no platform fees)

Contract norms: - 6-month or 1-year leases standard - 1–2 months deposit + 1 month advance rent - Utilities separate (electricity ~THB 7–8/unit, water ~THB 100–300/month) - Internet often included in condos

Red flags: - Landlord refuses written contract - Deposit exceeds 2 months - Utility rates far above government rates (electricity should be ~THB 7-8/unit) - No inventory list at move-in

5. Transport

Getting Around Pattaya

Songthaew (Baht Bus)

Fare: THB 10-30 depending on distance **Hours:** 06:00-02:00 (reduced frequency after midnight)

Songthaews are converted pickup trucks with two bench seats. They run fixed routes but function like shared taxis. Wave to stop, tell driver your destination, pay when exiting (press buzzer near driver).

Main routes: - Beach Road (southbound only) - Second Road (northbound only) - North/Central/South Pattaya Roads (cross-town) - Naklua loop - Jomtein line (from Central Festival)

Grab

Fare: App-priced, typically THB 80-200 for cross-town trips **Hours:** 24/7

Download Grab before arrival. Works reliably in Pattaya. No haggling, GPS-tracked routes. Good for airport transfers, late-night returns, and rainy days.

Motorbike Taxi

Fare: THB 40-100 for short trips **Hours:** 06:00-22:00

Drivers wear colored vests and congregate at street corners. Faster than cars in traffic. Agree on price before mounting. Helmets recommended (often not provided).

Taxi

Fare: Negotiated, starting ~THB 100 **Hours:** Sporadic

Metered taxis are rare in Pattaya. Most drivers quote flat rates. Use for airport transfers or when Grab surge pricing is extreme.

Motorbike/Scooter Rental

Daily rate: THB 200-350 **Monthly rate:** THB 3,000-5,000 **Requirements:** Passport deposit or cash bond (THB 2,000-5,000)

Legal reality: - International Driving Permit (IDP) required with motorcycle endorsement - Police checkpoints target foreigners without IDP - Fines: THB 500–1,000 (sometimes negotiable on-spot) - Travel insurance void if riding without valid license

Safety: - Wear helmet (required by law, THB 500 fine if caught) - Avoid driving under influence (checkpoints common) - Park in designated areas (towing common for sidewalk parking)

Intercity Connections

To/From Bangkok

Bus: - **Departure:** Pattaya North Bus Terminal (North Pattaya Road) - **Arrival:** Bangkok Ekkamai (Eastern) or Mo Chit (Northern) terminals - **Frequency:** Every 30–45 minutes, 05:00–22:00 - **Cost:** THB 130–150 - **Duration:** 1.5–2 hours (traffic-dependent)

Airport bus: - Direct to Suvarnabhumi Airport - **Cost:** THB 130–150 - **Duration:** 2 hours - **Schedule:** Hourly, 07:00–21:00

Private taxi: - **Cost:** THB 1,500–2,000 (negotiated) - **Duration:** 1.5 hours - **Door-to-door convenience**

To/From U-Tapao Airport

Minibus: THB 200–300, shared, waits for full load **Taxi:** THB 1,200–1,500, fixed counter price **Grab:** THB 800–1,200, app-priced

To Nearby Islands

Koh Larn (Coral Island): - **Ferry:** Bali Hai Pier → Koh Larn, THB 30, 45 minutes, hourly 07:00–18:00 - **Speedboat:** THB 200–300, 15 minutes, on-demand - **Day trip viable:** Yes, last ferry back 18:00

6. Food & Dining

Street Food

Pattaya's street food scene is vast and cheap. Expect THB 40–80 per meal.

Where to find it: - **Soi Buakhao:** Lunch crowds, office workers - **Walking Street area:** Evening vendors, post-beach crowds - **Central Festival food court:** Air-con alternative, THB 60–120 per dish - **Terminal 21 food court:** Cleaner, slightly pricier than street

Must-try dishes: - Pad Thai (THB 50–80) - Som Tam (papaya salad, THB 40–60) - Moo Ping (grilled pork skewers, THB 10–20 each) - Khao Pad (fried rice, THB 50–70) - Grilled seafood (prawns, squid, fish — market price)

Sit-Down Local Restaurants

Price range: THB 150–400 per person

Named places from POI file:

- **Mum Aroi Naklua** — Popular Thai seafood restaurant in Naklua. Fresh catch, local prices. Address: 139 Moo 5, Naklua.
- **Lung Sawai Seafood Pattaya** — Local seafood favorite. Address: 89/9 Moo 10, Sukhumvit-Pattaya 36 Alley.
- **Eat Me Restaurant Pattaya** — Modern Thai fusion on Walking Street. Address: 20/119 Moo 10, Walking Street.

Western/Tourist Restaurants

Price range: THB 300–800 per person

- **Bronx Pizza** — NYC-style pizza by the slice. So close to authentic it hurts. Address: 210 Soi Buakhao. Phone: +66 80 041 8560. Website: bronxpizzapattaya.com. Slice: THB 80–120.
- **The Coffee Club Pattaya** — Australian-style café chain. All-day breakfast, decent coffee. Address: Terminal 21 Pattaya, 777/1 Moo 6 Na Kluea.
- **La Baguette French Bakery Pattaya** — French bakery and café. Croissants, baguettes, quiche. Address: 193/10 Moo 10, South Pattaya Road.
- **Cabbages & Condoms Pattaya** — Restaurant with sea views supporting family planning. Quirky decor, solid Thai food. Address: 366/9 Moo 10, Pratumnak Road.
- **The Glass House Pattaya** — Beachfront restaurant south of Pattaya. Seafood focus, sunset views. Address: 5/22 Moo 1, Na Jomtien.

Coffee Shops

Starbucks: Multiple locations (Central Festival, Terminal 21, Beach Road). THB 120–180 per drink. Reliable Wi-Fi.

The Coffee Club: Terminal 21. Better food than Starbucks, similar coffee prices.

Local cafés: Soi Buakhao and Pratumnak have independent cafés charging THB 60–100 for decent coffee.

7. Remote Work & Coworking

Internet Reality

Fiber availability: Widespread in condos and commercial areas **Typical speeds:** 50–100 Mbps download, 10–30 Mbps upload **Mobile data:** 4G/5G widely available (AIS, True, dtac)

Power reliability: Generally stable. Occasional brief outages (5–15 minutes) during storms. Condos often have backup generators for elevators and pumps.

Coworking Spaces

AMPG Building Coworking

Address: 338/12 Moo 12, Pratamnak Road **Features:** Pool, nap room, meeting rooms **Best for:** Long-stay remote workers seeking community

One of Pattaya’s established coworking spaces. Practice-focused amenities (pool, nap room) suggest long-stay expat clientele.

Anchor Coworking Pattaya

Address: Pattaya (specific location varies — verify locally) **Best for:** Day passes, flexible hours

Smaller operation. Check current location and hours before visiting.

Co&Caffé Pattaya

Address: Pattaya (verify locally) **Best for:** Casual work sessions, coffee + laptop

Hybrid café/coworking model. Good for light work, not all-day sessions.

Café Work Options

Starbucks locations: Central Festival, Terminal 21, Beach Road. Reliable Wi-Fi, power outlets at some tables. Expect to buy drinks every 2–3 hours.

The Coffee Club: Terminal 21. Better food options, similar Wi-Fi reliability.

Hotel lobbies: Hilton, Centara Grand, and other upscale hotels have lobby seating with Wi-Fi. Buy coffee or lunch to justify occupancy.

Food courts: Central Festival and Terminal 21 food courts have Wi-Fi and power outlets. Cheap meals, acceptable for short work sessions.

8. Healthcare

Hospitals

Pattaya has excellent private hospitals catering to medical tourists. Quality is high, prices are 10–20% of Western equivalents.

Bangkok Hospital Pattaya

Address: 301 Moo 6 Sukhumvit Road, Nong Prue, Bang Lamung, Chon Buri 20150 **Phone:** +66 38 259 999 **Tier:** International-standard private hospital **Best for:** Serious conditions, surgery, specialist care

Part of Bangkok Hospital Group (Thailand's largest private hospital chain). JCI-accredited. English-speaking staff. Full diagnostic facilities. Prices higher than local hospitals but still fraction of Western costs.

Pattaya International Hospital

Address: 255/4 Central Pattaya Road, Muang Pattaya, Bang Lamung District, Chon Buri 20150 **Phone:** +66 38 428 374 **Website:** <https://www.pattayainterhospital.net/> **Tier:** 24-hour private hospital **Best for:** Emergency care, general treatment, inpatient stays

Central location, 24-hour emergency. Multilingual staff. Smaller than Bangkok Hospital but well-equipped for most conditions.

Pattaya Memorial Hospital

Address: 328/1 M.9 Central Pattaya Road, Nongprue, Banglamung, Chon Buri 20150 **Phone:** +66 38 488 777 **Website:** <https://www.pattayamemorial.com/> **Tier:** Private hospital **Best for:** General treatment, outpatient care

Mid-range private hospital. Good for non-emergency consultations, lab work, minor procedures.

What's Treatable Locally

Can handle: - Fever, infections, respiratory illness - Minor injuries, cuts, sprains - Gastrointestinal issues - Routine check-ups, lab work - Dental emergencies - Dermatology issues

Evacuation recommended for: - Major trauma (car accidents, serious falls) - Complex surgery (heart, brain, major orthopedic) - Advanced cancer treatment - Specialized pediatric care

Nearest evacuation destinations: - Bangkok (Bumrungrad, Bangkok Hospital, Samitivej) — 1.5–2 hours by road - Direct flights from U-Tapao to regional hubs (Singapore, Kuala Lumpur)

Pharmacies

Boots, Watsons, local pharmacies: Everywhere. No prescription required for many medications that require Rx in West (antibiotics, some painkillers).

Common medications: - Antibiotics (amoxicillin, azithromycin): ~THB 200–500/course - Pain relievers (paracetamol, ibuprofen): ~THB 50–150 - Antidiarrheals: ~THB 100–200 - Antihistamines: ~THB 100–200

Pharmacist consultation: Free at major chains. Most speak basic English.

9. Dental

Dental Clinics

Pattaya Smile Dental Clinic

Address: 111/57-8 Moo 10, South Pattaya Road, Banglamung, Chonburi 20150
Phone: +66 38 724 145 **Website:** <http://www.pattayasmiledentalclinic.com/>
Best for: General dentistry, cosmetic work

Established clinic with English-speaking staff. Online booking available.

Dental Paragon Clinic Pattaya

Address: 292/1-2 Central Pattaya Road, Banglamung, Chonburi 20150
Phone: +66 86 13 4703 **Website:** <https://www.dentalparagon.com/> **Best for:** Cosmetic dentistry, implants

Modern clinic, international standards. Higher price point but quality work.

Central Pattaya Dental Clinic

Address: 418/19-20 Central Pattaya Road, Nong Prue, Banglamung, Chon Buri 20150 **Best for:** General dentistry, emergency care

Central location, walk-ins accepted.

Common Procedure Costs

Procedure	Thailand (Pattaya)	US Average
Cleaning	THB 800–1,500 (\$25–45)	\$100–200
Filling (composite)	THB 1,500–3,000 (\$45–90)	\$200–400
Root canal	THB 5,000–10,000 (\$150–300)	\$800–1,500
Crown (porcelain)	THB 12,000–20,000 (\$360–600)	\$1,000–2,000
Implant (per tooth)	THB 40,000–70,000 (\$1,200–2,100)	\$3,000–5,000

Procedure	Thailand (Pattaya)	US Average
Extraction (simple)	THB 800–2,000 (\$25–60)	\$150–300

Insurance: Most travel insurance covers dental emergencies only (accidents, sudden pain). Routine work not covered. Some clinics offer direct billing — ask before treatment.

10. Safety & Emergency

Where It’s Genuinely Safe

Naklua / Wong Amat: Residential, family-oriented. Minimal street crime.

Pratumnak Hill: Expat area, quieter streets. Safe for evening walks.

Jomtien: Generally safe, especially beachfront areas. More families, less nightlife chaos.

Shopping malls: Central Festival, Terminal 21 — secure, air-con, well-lit.

Where to Be More Careful

Walking Street (evenings): Crowded, alcohol-fueled, pickpocketing common. Keep phone in front pocket, bag zipped and in front.

Soi Buakhao (late night): Bar area, similar risks to Walking Street but less intense.

Beach Road (night): Generally safe but avoid dark side streets alone.

Bali Hai Pier area: Can attract rougher crowds late at night.

What Actually Happens Here

Most common risks:

1. **Petty theft** — Pickpocketing in crowded areas, bag snatching from motorbikes (rare but happens)
2. **Scams** — Jet ski rental damage claims, gem scams, tuk-tuk “today only” deals
3. **Bar fights** — Alcohol + nightlife = occasional altercations. Walk away.
4. **Traffic accidents** — The real danger. Motorbike accidents kill more visitors than crime.

Violent crime against tourists: Rare. Most violence is between locals or within nightlife industry. Random attacks on foreigners are uncommon.

Common Scams

Jet ski rental: Rent jet ski, return with “damage” claim. Demand THB 10,000+ for pre-existing scratches. - **Prevention:** Photograph jet ski before rental, use reputable operators, avoid beach vendors.

Gem scam: Friendly stranger tells you about “one-day gem sale” at temple. Buy worthless stones at 10× value. - **Prevention:** No gem deals from strangers. Real gem stores have fixed locations and reputations.

Tuk-tuk/taxi “today only”: Driver says attraction is closed, offers alternative (gem shop, tailor). You get commission-driven detours. - **Prevention:** Use Grab or insist on your destination. Attractions rarely close unexpectedly.

Emergency Numbers

- **Tourist Police:** 1155 (English-speaking)
- **General Emergency:** 191 (police), 1669 (ambulance)
- **Bangkok Hospital Pattaya:** +66 38 259 999
- **Pattaya International Hospital:** +66 38 428 374

Police Responsiveness

Tourist Police (1155): Generally helpful, English-speaking. Handle tourist-specific issues (scams, theft, disputes).

Local police: Variable English ability. For serious issues, request Tourist Police or bring Thai-speaking friend.

Reality check: Police prioritize serious crimes. Petty theft under THB 10,000 often goes uninvestigated. File report for insurance, but don’t expect recovery.

Swimming Conditions

Pattaya Beach: Poor water quality (pollution, boat traffic). Swimming not recommended.

Wong Amat Beach (Naklua): Cleaner, safer for swimming. Still not pristine by Thai standards.

Jomtien Beach: Better than Pattaya Beach, acceptable for swimming.

Koh Larn: Best swimming near Pattaya. Clear water, multiple beaches.

Rip currents: Possible during monsoon season (May–October). Ask lifeguards before swimming.

Jellyfish: Occasional presence, especially rainy season. Vinegar neutralizes stings.

Road Safety

Traffic density: High, especially Beach Road and Second Road rush hours (07:00–09:00, 17:00–19:00).

Driving standards: Chaotic by Western standards. Lane discipline optional. Motorbikes filter through traffic.

Pedestrian safety: Poor. Sidewalks often blocked, crosswalks ignored. Cross carefully, make eye contact with drivers.

Motorbike accidents: The #1 cause of serious injury/death for visitors. Wear helmet, avoid driving under influence, don't rent if inexperienced.

Natural Disaster Risks

Flooding: Possible during heavy monsoon rains (September–October). Low-lying areas (parts of Beach Road, Soi Buakhao) can flood knee-deep. Usually drains within hours.

Earthquakes: Rare. Thailand is seismically stable.

Typhoons: Pattaya rarely hit directly, but tropical storms can bring heavy rain and wind (October–November).

Tsunamis: Extremely low risk. Gulf of Thailand is sheltered. 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami did not significantly impact Pattaya.

Air Quality

Dry season (November–April): Generally good.

Burning season (February–April): Northern Thailand agricultural burning can cause haze. Pattaya less affected than Chiang Mai but AQI can reach 100–150 (moderate).

Monitoring: AirVisual app, Thailand Pollution Control Department website.

11. Weather by Month

Pattaya has a tropical savanna climate — hot year-round with distinct wet and dry seasons.

Month	Avg High	Avg Low	Rainfall	Notes
January	31°C (88°F)	24°C (75°F)	16mm	Dry, pleasant, peak tourist season
February	31°C (88°F)	25°C (76°F)	20mm	Dry, warm, still peak season
March	32°C (90°F)	26°C (79°F)	47mm	Heating up, Songkran festival (mid- April)
April	33°C (91°F)	26°C (79°F)	68mm	Hottest month, Songkran water festival
May	33°C (91°F)	27°C (80°F)	121mm	Rainy season begins, occasional storms
June	32°C (90°F)	26°C (79°F)	132mm	Wet, humid, fewer tourists
July	32°C (90°F)	26°C (79°F)	104mm	Continued rain, good deals on accommo- dation
August	31°C (89°F)	26°C (78°F)	91mm	Rain persists, school holiday domestic tourists
September	31°C (88°F)	25°C (78°F)	214mm	Wettest month, flooding possible

Month	Avg High	Avg Low	Rainfall	Notes
October	31°C (88°F)	25°C (77°F)	225mm	Still wet, tail end of monsoon
November	31°C (87°F)	24°C (76°F)	57mm	Transition to dry season, improving
December	30°C (86°F)	23°C (74°F)	12mm	Dry, cool (by Thai standards), peak season

Best time to visit: November–February (dry, cooler, but most expensive)

Budget season: June–October (rainy, cheaper accommodation, fewer crowds)

Avoid if possible: September (wettest month, highest flood risk)

12. Shopping & Daily Life

Central Festival Pattaya Beach

Address: 333/99 Moo 9, Pattaya Sai Song Road **Phone:** 038-930-999 **Best for:** Everything — shopping, dining, cinema, supermarket

The largest mall in Pattaya. Beachfront location. Six floors of shops, restaurants, cinema, Big C supermarket, food court. Air-con refuge from heat. Tourist prices in some shops, local prices in others.

Terminal 21 Pattaya

Address: 777/1 Moo 6 Na Kluea, Bang Lamung **Phone:** +66 33 079 777 **Best for:** Food court, cinema, airport-themed decor

Newer mall with airport terminal theme. Each floor represents a different city (London, Tokyo, San Francisco). Food court on top floor is excellent and cheap. Less crowded than Central Festival.

Royal Garden Plaza

Address: 218 Moo 10, Beach Road (end of Walking Street) **Best for:** Ripley's Museum, Hard Rock Café, beach access

Older mall at Walking Street end. Houses Ripley's Believe It or Not! museum, Hard Rock Café, souvenir shops. More tourist-focused than local.

Mike Shopping Mall

Address: North Pattaya Road (near Dolphin roundabout) **Best for:** Tailors, electronics, budget shopping

Older, less polished than Central Festival. Tailor shops, electronics, phone accessories, budget clothing. Good for practical purchases, not ambiance.

13. Groceries, Markets & Meat

Supermarkets

Big C Supercenter

Locations: Pattaya Sai 2 (North), Central Center Pattaya **Phone:** 038-361-361 **Best for:** Bulk buying, Thai ingredients, household goods

Big C is the workhorse supermarket. Wide aisles, English signage, competitive prices. Own-brand products are cheapest. Food court outside serves THB 40–60 meals.

Lotus's (formerly Tesco Lotus)

Location: North Pattaya, near Dolphin roundabout **Best for:** Weekly groceries, imported goods section

Similar to Big C, slightly more imported products. Loyalty card offers discounts.

Villa Market

Location: 81/161 Moo 10, Pattaya Sai 2 Road **Best for:** Imported Western products, specialty items

Premium supermarket with imported cheese, wine, cereals, and frozen goods. Prices 2–3× Big C. Expats stock up here for comfort foods.

7-Eleven / FamilyMart

Locations: Everywhere (open 24 hours) **Best for:** Snacks, drinks, toiletries, quick meals

Thailand's second home. Toasted sandwiches, instant noodles, fresh coffee, ATM access. Open 24/7.

Wet Markets

Naklua Market — North Pattaya’s main fresh market. Seafood, meat, vegetables, prepared food. Open mornings (05:00–12:00). Best prices, requires Thai language or pointing.

Theprasit Weekend Market — Theprasit Road. Weekend only (Saturday–Sunday). Street food, clothing, household goods. More tourist-oriented than Naklua Market.

Meat Sourcing

Supermarkets: Sell packaged chicken, pork, beef. Quality is reliable, prices fair. Big C and Lotus’s have butchery counters.

Wet markets: Fresh meat daily, often cheaper than supermarkets. Chicken: ~THB 80–120/kg. Pork: ~THB 100–150/kg. Beef: ~THB 200–350/kg.

Butcher shops: Rare in Pattaya. Most locals buy from wet markets or supermarkets.

Seafood: Wet markets and beachfront vendors. Price varies by catch. Squid, prawns, fish widely available.

14. Language & Local Etiquette

Survival Thai Phrases

Thai	Pronunciation	Meaning
	sa-wat-dii	Hello / Goodbye
	kòp kun	Thank you
/	kráp / kê	Polite particle (male / female)
	tào rài	How much?
	paeng	Expensive
	tùuk	Cheap
	mái à-ròi	Not delicious
	náam	Water
	kâao	Rice / Food
	hông náam	Toilet
	chúai dúi	Help!
	rong-payaa-baan	Hospital
	dtam-rùat	Police

Pronunciation tip: Thai is tonal. The same syllable said with different tones means different things. Locals appreciate effort even if tones are wrong.

Etiquette Norms

Temple Visits

- **Dress code:** Shoulders and knees covered. No sleeveless tops, short shorts, or mini-skirts.
- **Behavior:** Remove shoes before entering buildings. Sit with feet tucked behind you (never point feet at Buddha images).
- **Photography:** Allowed, but be respectful. No climbing on structures.

Tipping Culture

- **Restaurants:** 10% service charge often included. Extra THB 20–50 for good service.
- **Taxis/songthaews:** Not expected, but rounding up appreciated.
- **Hotels:** THB 20–50 per day for housekeeping.
- **Massage:** THB 50–100 for 1–2 hour sessions.

Bargaining

- **Markets:** Expected (except food). Start at 50–60% of asking price, meet in middle.
- **Malls:** Fixed prices (no bargaining).
- **Tuk-tuks/taxis:** Negotiate before boarding.

Gestures to Avoid

- **Pointing feet:** Feet are considered low/dirty. Don't point them at people or Buddha images.
- **Touching heads:** Head is sacred. Don't touch anyone's head (including children).
- **Public anger:** Losing your temper ("losing face") is deeply embarrassing. Stay calm, smile, negotiate.

Table Manners

- **Fork and spoon:** Spoon is primary utensil (right hand), fork pushes food onto spoon (left hand).
 - **Chopsticks:** Used for noodle dishes only.
 - **Sharing:** Dishes shared family-style. Take small portions from communal plates.
 - **Finishing food:** Clean plate = you're still hungry. Leave a bite to signal you're full.
-

15. History & Culture Snapshot

Brief History

Pre-1960s: Pattaya was a fishing village with a small beach used by locals for weekend picnics.

1960s–1970s: US military discovered Pattaya during Vietnam War. R&R (rest and recreation) established. Bars, hotels, and infrastructure built to serve soldiers. This era established Pattaya’s nightlife DNA.

1980s–1990s: Transition from military R&R to civilian tourism. Japanese, then European tourists arrived. Family attractions added (Nong Nooch Garden, Sanctuary of Truth).

1991: Mount Pinatubo eruption (Philippines) caused lahars (volcanic mudflows) that affected the region. Clark Air Base (Philippines) closed; some US personnel relocated to Thailand, but Pattaya’s military era was ending.

2000s–present: Efforts to rebrand Pattaya as family-friendly destination. New malls, water parks, and attractions opened. Nightlife remains dominant, but city attracts more diverse tourists (Russian, Chinese, Indian, domestic).

Cultural Touchpoints

Songkran (Thai New Year) — Mid-April

Three-day water festival. Streets become water fight zones. Buckets, water guns, hoses — everyone is fair game. Protect electronics in waterproof bags.

Loy Krathong — November

Festival of lights. Float krathongs (banana leaf baskets with candles) on water. Pattaya Beach and hotel ponds host celebrations.

Thai Royal Family

Deeply revered. Stand for national anthem (played before movies, at some public events). Don’t speak disrespectfully about royalty (lèse-majesté laws are severe).

Buddhism

Predominant religion. Temples (wats) everywhere. Monks in saffron robes receive morning alms. Women must not touch monks or hand objects directly to them.

Muay Thai

National sport. Fights held at stadiums in Pattaya. Tourist shows (with cultural performance) vs. real fights — know which you're booking.

16. Tourism & Day Trips

Top Day Trips

Koh Larn (Coral Island)

Distance: 7km offshore **Transport:** Ferry from Bali Hai Pier (THB 30, 45 minutes) or speedboat (THB 200–300, 15 minutes) **Cost:** THB 500–1,500/day (ferry, lunch, beach chair, activities) **Worth it:** Yes — best swimming near Pattaya

Koh Larn has several beaches: Tawaen (most developed), Samae (quieter), Nual (snorkeling). Rent motorbike on island (~THB 300/day) to explore. Day trip viable — last ferry back 18:00.

Sanctuary of Truth

Address: 206/2 Moo 5, Soi Naklua 12, Naklua **Phone:** +66 38 367 229 **Website:** <http://www.sanctuaryoftruth.com/> **Entry:** THB 500 (includes cultural show) **Worth it:** Yes — unique architecture

Massive wooden temple carved entirely by hand. No metal nails — traditional joinery. Tours in multiple languages. Dress code: shoulders and knees covered.

Nong Nooch Tropical Garden

Address: 34/1 Moo 7, Na Jomtien, Sattahip **Phone:** +66 38 429 321 **Entry:** THB 500–800 (depending on shows included) **Worth it:** Yes — world-class botanical garden

250-acre garden with themed sections (French, Japanese, European). Cultural shows (Thai dance, elephant show). Can combine with nearby attractions (Silverlake Winery, Khao Chi Chan Buddha).

Khao Chi Chan (Buddha Mountain)

Distance: ~30km south of Pattaya **Entry:** Free (donations welcome) **Worth it:** Quick stop (30 minutes)

Giant Buddha image carved into mountainside. Visible from highway. Small temple complex at base. Combine with Nong Nooch or Silverlake.

Silverlake Winery

Distance: Near Khao Chi Chan **Entry:** Free (tastings extra) **Worth it:** If you like wine

Vineyard in unlikely location (tropical Thailand). Wine tastings, restaurant, photo ops with vineyards. Tourist-oriented but pleasant.

Bang Saen

Distance: 20km north of Pattaya **Transport:** Songthaew or Grab (THB 200–300) **Worth it:** For local beach experience

Where Thais go for beach days. Less polished than Pattaya, more authentic. Seafood restaurants line the beach. Good for weekend day trip.

Tourist Trap vs. Worth It

Tourist traps: - **Pattaya Floating Market:** Overpriced, manufactured experience. Skip unless you really want the photo. - **Gem shops:** Commission-driven, overpriced stones. Avoid. - **“Today only” tour deals:** Always available tomorrow. Don’t be pressured.

Actually worth it: - **Koh Larn:** Best beaches near Pattaya. - **Sanctuary of Truth:** Unique, impressive craftsmanship. - **Nong Nooch:** World-class gardens, good shows.

DIY vs. Booked Tour

DIY advantages: Cheaper, flexible schedule, no shopping detours. **Booked tour advantages:** Transport handled, guide commentary, no planning needed.

For Koh Larn: DIY is easy (ferry is straightforward). **For Nong Nooch/Sanctuary:** Booked tour saves Grab costs if visiting multiple sites.

17. Master Links

Official Sources

- **Pattaya City Hall:** www.pattaya.go.th (local municipal administration)
- **Tourism Authority of Thailand:** www.tourismthailand.org
- **Thai Immigration Bureau:** www.immigration.go.th (visa information, extensions)
- **US Embassy Thailand:** th.usembassy.gov (US citizen services)
- **UK FCDO Travel Advice:** www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/thailand

Emergency

- **Tourist Police:** 1155 (English-speaking, 24/7)
- **General Emergency:** 191 (police), 1669 (ambulance)
- **Bangkok Hospital Pattaya:** +66 38 259 999
- **Pattaya International Hospital:** +66 38 428 374

Transport

- **Suvarnabhumi Airport:** www.suvarnabhumiairport.com
- **U-Tapao Airport:** www.utapao.co.th
- **Bell Travel Service (airport bus):** www.belltravel.com

Community

- **Pattaya Expats Club (Facebook):** Active community, rental listings, advice
 - **Pattaya Mail:** www.pattayamail.com (English-language news)
 - **Pattaya People:** www.pattayapeople.com (news, classifieds)
-

18. Final Budget Table

Monthly and 90-day cost-of-stay estimates for Pattaya, in USD, assuming **35 THB per USD**. Figures trace back to the neighborhood rent ranges, transport notes, Numbeo Pattaya baseline, and the city-specific notes earlier in this guide.

Category	Lean Nomad	Comfortable Nomad	Premium Nomad
Room	\$180 (studio/1BR in local neighborhoods or Second Road)	\$450 (mid-range 1BR condo near beach / central)	\$1,050 (luxury 1–2BR beachfront condo or hotel)
Food	\$140 (street food, local restaurants, home cooking)	\$550 (mix of street food and mid-range restaurants)	\$1,275 (upscale restaurants, international cuisine)
Transport	\$45 (songthaews, walking, bicycle rental)	\$180 (mix of public transport and Grab/taxi)	\$425 (private taxi, car rental, regular Grab)

Category	Lean Nomad	Comfortable Nomad	Premium Nomad
Coworking	\$0 (café Wi-Fi, no membership)	\$50 (café spend + occasional coworking day)	\$150 (dedicated desk / premium space + home fiber)
Insurance	\$50 (basic travel medical cover)	\$100 (solid travel health insurance)	\$200 (comprehensive + evacuation cover)
Visa	\$60 (one 30-day extension)	\$80 (visa extension + reporting buffer)	\$150 (visa support / Elite long-stay path)
Entertainment	\$70 (free/low-cost activities, local beer, minimal nightlife)	\$275 (paid attractions, occasional tours, mid-range bars)	\$625 (premium activities, private tours, upscale bars/clubs)
Buffer	\$40 (utilities + small contingency)	\$110 (utilities + contingency)	\$150 (utilities + contingency)
TOTAL / month	\$585	\$1,795	\$4,025
90-Day total	\$1,755	\$5,385	\$12,075
Daily average	~\$20/day	~\$60/day	~\$134/day

Budget Notes

Lean Nomad (~\$20/day / \$585/month): - Budget studio or 1BR on Second Road or in local neighborhoods - Street food, local restaurants, some home cooking - Songthaews, walking, bicycle rental - Free or low-cost beach and daytime activities - Minimal nightlife

Comfortable Nomad (~\$60/day / \$1,795/month): - Mid-range 1BR condo near the beach or central Pattaya - Mix of street food and mid-range restaurants - Songthaews + Grab/taxi for errands and nights out - Paid attractions, occasional tours, regular nightlife

Premium Nomad (~\$134/day / \$4,025/month): - Luxury 1-2BR beachfront condo or hotel - Upscale restaurants and international cuisine - Private taxi or car rental - Premium activities, private tours, upscale bars and clubs

Cost-Saving Tips

Accommodation: - Negotiate monthly condo rates (30-50% off nightly rates for 3+ months) - Stay on Second Road or in Naklua/Jomtien for much cheaper

rent than Beach Road - Facebook groups like “Pattaya Condos” often beat booking-site prices

Food: - Street food and local Thai restaurants: THB 50–120/meal - Food courts at Terminal 21 and malls are good value - Cook at home: markets have cheap fresh produce and seafood

Transport: - Songthaews (baht buses) along the main beach road are THB 10–20 - Motorbike rental is popular but wear a helmet and carry an IDP - Grab is more expensive than songthaews but easier at night

Activities: - Beach is free - Many temples and viewpoints are free or low-cost - Combine day trips to Ko Lan, Rayong, or Jomtien to split transport costs

19. Glossary of Local Terms

Term	Meaning
Baht (THB)	Thai currency
Songthaew	Shared pickup truck taxi (baht bus)
Soi	Side street/alley
Wat	Buddhist temple
Farang	Foreigner (neutral term, not offensive)
Mai pen rai	“No problem” / “Never mind”
Sabai sabai	Relaxed, comfortable, no worries
Aroi	Delicious
Phu Ying / Phu Chai	Woman / Man
Khun	Polite title (Mr./Ms.)
Wai	Traditional Thai greeting (palms together)
Krup / Ka	Polite particles (male / female)
Tuk-tuk	Three-wheeled motorized taxi
Moo	Village/subdistrict (used in addresses)
Tambon	Subdistrict
Amphoe	District
Changwat	Province

20. Sources & Credits

Primary Sources

- **Wikipedia** — **Pattaya:** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pattaya> (CC BY-SA 4.0)

- **Wikivoyage — Pattaya:** <https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Pattaya> (CC BY-SA 4.0)

POI Data

- **Pattaya POI file:** `/home/jason/workspaces/theleannomad.com/cities/pattaya/pattaya-pois.js` (84 verified locations)

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Named places (hospitals, hotels, restaurants, attractions) verified against POI file and source materials. Addresses, phone numbers, and websites current as of 2026-07-07.

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