



# Day Trips from Bangkok

## Ayuthaya Historical Park p153

Thailand's heroic former capital, Ayuthaya is a Unesco World Heritage site and a major pilgrimage site for anyone interested in ancient history.

## Ko Samet p156

This island, only a few hours from Bangkok, has famously squeaky sand beaches and a range of accommodation to fit any budget.

## Amphawa p159

Amphawa's canal-side setting and ancient wooden houses look like they are straight out of a movie set, and homestays can provide a firsthand experience of this unique community.

## Phetchaburi (Phetburi) p161

Phetchaburi's temples and peak-roofed wooden houses combine to form the epitome of central Thai life.

## Kanchanaburi p165

History is only a train ride away in Kanchanaburi, where museums and touching monuments bring home the area's past as a WWII labour camp.

## Khao Yai p170

This area is home to Khao Yai National Park, one of Thailand's biggest and best preserves, where mountainous monsoon forests boast hundreds of resident species.



## TOP SIGHTS

## AYUTHAYA HISTORICAL PARK อุทยานประวัติศาสตร์อยุธยา

**Ancient ruins, the vibe of rural Thailand, tasty food, good-value accommodation – and all of it only 70km from Bangkok: Ayuthaya is the easiest and most worthwhile escape from the Big Mango.**

The riverside city served as the seat of one of ancient Thailand's most powerful former kingdoms until 1767, when it was destroyed in warfare by the Burmese. Today, the ruins of the former capital, Ayuthaya Historical Park, are one of Thailand's biggest tourist sites. They're separated into two distinct districts: ruins 'on the island', in the central park of town west of Th Chee Kun, are most easily visited by bicycle (50B per day) or motorbike (200B per day); those 'off the island', opposite the river from the centre, are best visited by way of an evening boat tour (200B per hour). For more detailed descriptions of the ruins, you can pick up the *Ayuthaya* booklet from the Tourist Information Centre.

### On the Island

#### Wat Phra Si Sanphet

Once the largest **temple** (วัดพระศรีสรรเพชญ์; admission 50B; ☉8am-7pm) in Ayuthaya, this was used as the royal palace by several kings. Built in the 14th century, the compound contained a 16m standing Buddha coated with 250kg of gold, which was melted down and carted off by the Burmese conquerors. Its three Ayuthaya-style *chedi* (stupas) are identified with Thai art more than any other style. The adjacent **Wat Phra Mongkhon Bophit** (วัดพระมงคลบพิตร; admission free; ☉8am-7pm) houses one of the largest bronze seated Buddhas in Thailand.

#### Wat Lokayasutharam

This **temple** (วัดโลกยสุธาราม; off Th Khlong Thaw; admission free; ☉8am-7pm) features an impressive 28m-long reclining Buddha, ostensibly dating back to the early Ayuthaya period. A visit is worth the short bike trip it takes to reach it.

#### Wat Phra Mahathat

This **wat** (วัดพระมหาธาตุ; cnr Th Chee Kun & Th Naresuan; admission 50B; ☉8am-7pm) has one of the first *prang* (Khmer-style tower) built in the capital and an evocative Buddha head engulfed by fingerlike tree roots – the most photographed site in Ayuthaya.

### DON'T MISS...

- ➡ Wat Phra Si Sanphet
- ➡ Riverside setting at Wat Chai Wattanaram
- ➡ Reclining Buddha at Wat Lokayasutharam
- ➡ Ancient murals at Wat Ratburana

### PRACTICALITIES

- ➡ อุทยานประวัติศาสตร์อยุธยา
- ➡ admission to individual sites 20B to 50B, day pass 220B
- ➡ ☉8am-6pm

### SLEEPING IN AYUTHAYA

- ➡ **Baan Lotus Guest House** (☎0 3525 1988; 20 Th Pamaphrao; s 200B, d 400-600B; ☹☹) Set in large, leafy grounds, this converted teak schoolhouse has a cool, clean feel and remains our favourite place to crash. Staff are as charmingly old-school as the building itself.
- ➡ **Promptong Mansion** (☎0 3524 2459; www.promptong.com; off Th Dechawat; s/d/tr 500/700/1100B; ☹☹) Tucked away off the main road, Promptong Mansion is a four-storey guesthouse that has a distinctive buzz thanks to its enthusiastic staff.
- ➡ **Tony's Place** (☎0 3525 2578; www.tonysplace-ayuthaya.com; 12/18 Soi 2, Th Naresuan; r 200-1200B; ☹☹) Budget rooms offer just the basics, but the true flashpacker can hang out in renovated rooms that verge on the palatial, relatively speaking.