



ศาลจุดพ่อนัน

เขตปทุมวัน
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Welcome to Bangkok

Scratch Bangkok's surface and you'll find a city with mega-malls minutes from 200-year-old homes, temples sharing space with neon-lit strips of sleaze, and food cart-lined streets overlooked by bars perched on skyscrapers. As Bangkok races towards the future, these quirks will continue to supply the city with its unique brand of Thai-ness.

Street shrine, Bangkok

RICHARD I'ANSON / GETTY IMAGES ©



Bangkok Top Sights

Wat Phra Kaew & Grand Palace (p24)

Easily the most ostentatious temple in Thailand, Wat Phra Kaew blows minds with its blinged-out structures and Emerald Buddha. Next door, the Grand Palace is the equally decadent former residence of Thailand's royal family.



Wat Pho (p28)

At nearly 50m long and 15m high, it's impossible not to be awed by Wat Pho's reclining Buddha. If you require more than just girth, the grounds are also home to a traditional massage school.



SAMART BOON-VANG / GETTY IMAGES ©



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Jim Thompson House (p78)

The eponymous American silk entrepreneur mysteriously disappeared in 1967. His Thai-style former home lives on as a visit-worthy repository for ageing local traditions and artwork.

10 Top Sights

Chatuchak Weekend Market (p136)

In a city obsessed with commerce, Chatuchak takes the prize as Bangkok's biggest and baddest market. Silks, sneakers, fighting fish and fluffy puppies – if it can be sold in Thailand, you'll find it here.



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Wat Arun (p32)

It's the setting by the river, rather than the gold or Buddha statues, that draws most folks here. And justifiably: the views are great and Wat Arun is one of the few temples visitors can climb on.



ANUCHIT KAM-SONGMUEANG / GETTY IMAGES ©

Ko Kret (p142)

Leave the city behind at this artificial yet thoroughly rural-feeling island in Mae Nam Chao Phraya. Arrive on a weekend and combine your excursion with a busy open-air market and unique eats.



JOHN BORTHWICK / GETTY IMAGES ©



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Wat Traimit (Golden Buddha) (p62)

All the gold in Chinatown (and believe us, there's a lot) would scarcely be enough to recreate this nearly 6-ton, solid-gold Buddha image. Let the jaw-dropping begin at this temple in Bangkok's Chinatown.



ARIYOSHI RITA / GETTY IMAGES ©

Dusit Palace Park (p58)

Witness Victorian sense and Thai sensibilities merging in this former royal enclave. Visit museums and the world's largest teak building, or simply take advantage of Dusit Palace Park's green setting – itself an anomaly in Bangkok



ANDREA PISTOLESI / GETTY IMAGES ©

Ayuthaya (p140)

The remains of the once decadent capital of Siam are now a Unesco World Heritage Site, and an easy (and must-do) day trip from Bangkok.



Bangkok Local Life

Insider tips to help you find the real city

Don't want to feel like a sheltered package holidaymaker? Rest assured that it's a cinch to get local in Bangkok, a city where hectic tourist attractions often rub shoulders with classic local neighbourhoods.

Banglamphu Pub Crawl (p42)

- **Fun bars**
- **Live music**

Bangkok's most traditional 'hood is also one of its best for nightlife. Parts of Banglamphu can feel dominated by the backpacker magnet that is Th Khao San, but just off the main strip are heaps of bars and restaurants frequented mostly by young locals.

A Taste of Chinatown (p64)

- **Street food**
- **Urban exploration**

Many places in Chinatown have neither roof nor menu, but it's not unusual for locals to brave traffic, heat or rain for a meal here. Not surprisingly,

Chinese-style dishes rule – think noodles, pork and fried dishes – but seafood, sweets and fruit also have their places.

Gay Silom (p98)

- **Gay bars**
- **Gay dance clubs**

Come night-time, gay visitors and locals alike flock to the side streets off lower Th Silom. The alternatives run the gamut from seedy go-go bars to sophisticated dance clubs – and just about everything in between.

Victory Monument & Around (p94)

- **Live music**
- **Regional Thai food**

Want a taste of provincial Thailand without leaving

Bangkok? Head to this suburban 'hood known for its main landmark. Here you'll find fun bars, live music and good food, from bars boasting wine and cheese to street-side stalls hawking northeastern Thai specialities – all served up without a hint of big-city pretension.

RCA (Royal City Avenue) (p116)

- **Dance clubs**
- **Live music**

Hands-down the city's premier nightlife strip; RCA's clubs were formerly a teen scene, but the area has grown up in recent years. Today it draws a wide spectrum of partiers, not to mention a hearty selection of music, from live pop to big-name DJs.



Above: Chao Phraya cruise; **Below:** Opera performer, Vegetarian Festival



**Other great places
to experience the
city like a local:**

MBK Food Island
(p86)

Amulet Market (p39)

Asia Herb Association
(p129)

Thanon Bamrung
Meuang (p57)

Chao Phraya Dinner
Cruise (p108)

Paragon Cineplex
(p90)

Vegetarian Festival
(p73)

ThaiCraft Fair (p133)

Raja's Fashions
(p134)