

BANGKOK

FALL & WINTER GUIDE 2011 – 2012



The best places to eat, sleep and play in Bangkok this fall and winter

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INTRODUCTION



TripAdvisor, the most trusted source for where to eat, sleep and play in thousands of destinations around the world, has collected the best insider tips from its 50 million monthly visitors to produce a unique series of travel guides. In addition to the best hotels, restaurants and attractions for every type of traveler, you'll get great advice about what to pack, how to get around and where to find the best views. Be sure to check out the guides at www.tripadvisor.com.



You'll find reviews for more than 520,000 hotels, 125,000 vacation rentals, 155,000 attractions and 715,000 restaurants on TripAdvisor.com. Learn from other travelers what to expect before you make your plans.



PACKING TIPS

1. Bangkok has "three seasons—hot, hotter and hottest. **Be prepared for hot and steamy weather.** In March through May, temperatures can soar into the 100s and stifle even the heartiest of travelers."—TripAdvisor Member
2. During the wet season between May and October, "at times—but not all the time—the rain comes down in buckets, and the thunderstorms can be dramatic. But if you are visiting during this time of year, **don't bother to bring a raincoat**—it will be too hot to wear it. **Carry an umbrella with you at all times** and be prepared to take your shoes off and wade, and you'll be fine."—TripAdvisor Member
3. "Have some **dress sense**—how you dress in Thailand is quite important. You'll notice that Thai women are very **modest** in public—they usually swim fully clothed."—TripAdvisor Member
4. "Read Robert Cooper and Nanthapa Cooper's tome, **Culture Shock! Thailand: A Survival Guide to Custom and Etiquette**, which will prepare you for everything, including an audience with the King of Siam."—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

Inside BANGKOK

Bangkok, the capital of Thailand since 1782, is a relatively new capital city; however, it is bursting with a mixture of old (stunning temples and shrines, the Grand Palace, reclining Buddhas) and new (skyscrapers, the Skytrain rail line, luxury accommodations). The energy in the city is tangible, with bustling street markets, high-end shopping, the notorious shows, late-night clubbing and early morning almsgiving.

Yet despite the frenetic atmosphere, you don't have to look far for the meditative and tranquil feeling that many associate with the Buddhist city. Let yourself go limber during a massage at Wat Pho, float your tension away on a boat cruise along the Chao Phraya River or delight in the local food at one of the many street stalls.

Top VIEWS



BANGKOK'S BEST VIEWS

Is that vertigo or have you just had one too many martinis? You won't know for sure at **Sirocco**, an open-air bar on the 64th floor of a skyscraper. "Ohh, what I can say here? It's unbelievable and beautiful—I can see the whole of Bangkok City at night."—TripAdvisor Member, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Sky Bar at Sirocco, State Tower, 1055 Silom Road, 2 624 9555

"**Wat Arun** is simply a sight for the senses. Look up close at the bits and pieces of the Wat—they are decorated by seashells and bits of porcelain. The views from the top are very lovely and make the narrow and steep climb up all that much more worthwhile."—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Temple of the Dawn (Wat Arun), Tha Tien Pier, Chao Phraya River, 2 465 5640

Try a view of Bangkok from the water. "I was lucky enough to take a three-day trip up river on the **Manohra Song**. The ship and crew pampered all six guests with luxury. Quality food, service and cabins. Each couple has their own guide when the boat docks, to escort you to many interesting venues."—TripAdvisor Member, Pennsylvania

Manohra Song, Marriott Bangkok Resort & Spa, 257 Charoennakorn Road, Samrae Thonburi, 2 477 0770

Where to PLAY

TOP 10 Attractions

1. Helping Hands Thai Cooking School, Klong Toei Market, 084 901 8717
2. Temple of the Reclining Buddha (Wat Pho), Sanam Chai Road and Maharaj Road, 2 225 9595
3. Temple of the Dawn (Wat Arun), Tha Tien Pier, Chao Phraya River
4. Wat Phra Kaew, Thanon Na Phra Lan, Phra Nakhon, 02 222 0094
5. Grand Palace, Na Phra Lan Rd, Maharaj Pier, 2 224 1833
6. Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Wat Phra Kaeo), Grand Palace Complex, Na Phra Lan Road
7. Siam Niramit, 19 Tiamruammit Road, Huay Kwang, 2 649 9222
8. Snake Farm (Queen Saovabha Memorial Institute), 1871 Rama IV Road, Thai Red Cross Institute, 2 520 1614
9. Skytrain (Rot Fai Fah), Siam Square (Central Station), 2 222 0175
10. Chao Phraya River



FAMILIES

"We poured scented water and dropped baht coins into jugs around the **Reclining Buddha**. The kids really enjoyed it."—TripAdvisor Member, Syracuse, N.Y.

Temple of the Reclining Buddha (Wat Pho), Sanam Chai Road and Maharaj Road, 2 225 9595

Komodo dragons! Sumatran rhinoceros! Elephant rides! Find them at the **Dusit Zoo**. "It was a good way to pass an afternoon with the children."—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

Dusit Zoo, 71 Rama 5 Road, Dusit, 2 281 2000

Ever seen a milking? A snake milking, that is! At the **Red Cross Snake Farm**, "the demonstration of the extraction of venom from poisonous snakes and the handling, out-of-cage display and educating talk on snakes such as the King Cobra, Thai cobra, python, etc., is quite interesting for children."—TripAdvisor Member, Sydney, Australia

Red Cross Snake Farm, 1871 Rama IV Road, 2 252 0161



ROMANCE

"If you're looking for something other than sightseeing and shopping, the **Baipai Cooking School** is definitely a must. We got to cook and eat what we made as the lesson went on, and both of us had fun cooking together."—TripAdvisor Member, Scotland

Baipai Thai Cooking School, 150/12 Soi Naksuwan, Nonsee Road, 2 294 9029

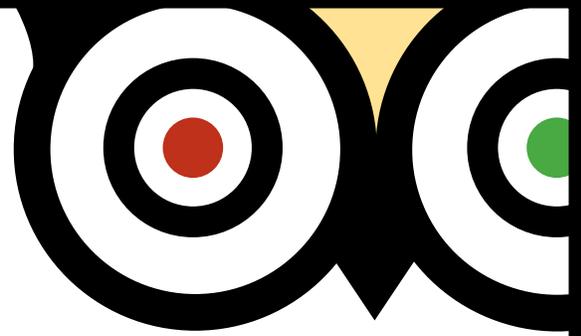
"The **Peninsula Spa** is the best I've experienced. The service is wonderful, from making the booking to the treatments to the relaxation room for post treatment. Absolutely romantic in setting and decor."—TripAdvisor Member, Japan

Peninsula Spa by ESPA, Peninsula Hotel, 333 Charoennakom Road, Klongsan, 2 861 2888

Hopeless romantics are advised to "try **Vertigo**, the roof restaurant/pub at the Banyan Tree Hotel. That is, if you can find a seat, since it's pretty popular. Great view, cool wind, great romantic atmosphere—you won't regret it!"—TripAdvisor Member, Bangkok

Vertigo, Banyan Tree Hotel, 21/100 South Sathon Road, 2 679 1200

Where to PLAY



BUDGET

The **Temple of the Emerald Buddha** “is a huge, incredible riot of glittering gold and color. Pictures cannot do it justice. Definitely a must-see in Bangkok.”—TripAdvisor Member, Turkey

Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Wat Phra Kaeo), Grand Palace Complex, 2 222 0094

“If you’re looking to get away from the sterile shopping centers, make time to wonder around **Chinatown**. There are many small alleys, so you never know what you might find.”—TripAdvisor Member

Chinatown

“You never know what you might find.”

“If you’re willing to spend some time comparing vendor’s items and do your homework, you can come away from the **Chatuchak Market** with some good deals at the end of your day. Good street food, at the end of the Skytrain line and very easy to reach.”—TripAdvisor Member, Bangkok

Chatuchak Market, adjacent to Chatuchak Park



ADVENTURE

Gore-lovers should check-out Thai’s national pastime, **Muaythai (Thai Boxing)**. The pre-match rituals, music and gambling are a great warm-up. But be warned: “The fighting is real, so this spectator sport is not for the faint of heart.”—TripAdvisor Member, Devon, England

Muay Thai (Thai Boxing), Lumpinee Stadium, Rama IV Road, 2 251 4303

“If you want to witness another side of Thai life, **Absolute Explorer Tours** runs a wonderful day trip to the countryside around Bangkok. The cycling is very easy, along pathways, tracks and very quiet tarred roads. Frequent stops are made, and the guides give great insight into country life.”—TripAdvisor Member, Hollywood, U.K.

Absolute Explorer Tours, 99/1 Udomsuk 43-45, Sukhumvit Soi 103, 87 077 9696

Kiwi Fishing Bangkok sets up your fishing expedition “for comfort, with everything you need to relax and enjoy the day, even down to the tea and coffee, ohhh and the hammock! The first bait was not even in the water 10 seconds and the fishing was on! I proceeded to land giant Mekong catfish one after the other. The pace just didn’t stop!”—TripAdvisor Member

Kiwi Fishing Bangkok, Bung Sam Lan Lake, Bangkok, 85 109 6979

“...not for the faint of heart.”

TripAdvisor members have posted more than 8,000,000 traveler photos on the site. The good, the bad and the very candid. It’s almost like being there!



EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL

“No other place gives you a comparable idea of the beauty, simplicity and sophistication of the Thai domestic arts.”

Jim Thompson House is “very inspiring and educational.”—TripAdvisor Member, Los Angeles, Calif.

Jim Thompson House, 6 Soi Kasemsan 2, Rama I Road, 2 216 7368

At **The Grand Palace**, “there’s glitter and gold everywhere you look. There are a million details not to be overlooked.”—TripAdvisor Member, The Netherlands

The Grand Palace, Na Phra Lan Road, Maharaj Pier, next to Wat Phra Kaeo Temple Complex, city center, 2 224 1833

“...glitter and gold everywhere you look.”

The **Vimanmek Mansion** “is open to the public with guided tours. In the morning and afternoon, there is a 30-minute display of Thai dancing and Thai boxing. Each differently styled building holds different national collections.”—TripAdvisor Member, United Kingdom

Vimanmek Mansion, Ratchawithi Road, 2 628 6300



RELAXATION

“Separate from the temple itself and around the back lay the **monks’ quarters**, where quiet lanes house monks praying and going about their daily work. There’s even a basketball court where, sometimes, you see monks shooting hoops in their brilliant orange robes.”—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Monks’ Quarters at Wat Pho, Chetupon Road

“From the moment you walk into **Dahra**, the hustle and bustle of the city are gone, and you feel a wonderful warmth and ambiance. Everyone is very professional. I’ve never seen my husband so relaxed!”—TripAdvisor Member, Thailand

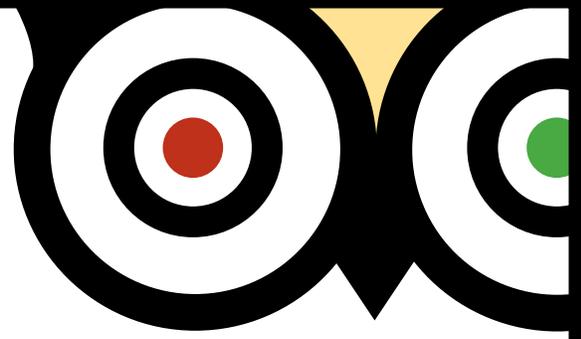
Dahra Beauty & Spa, Triple Two Hotel, Silom Soi 18, 2 235 4811

Visit the sights in a more leisurely fashion with a one-day river pass. “The **CHEAPEST** way is just to jump on a **Chao Phraya Tourist Boat** and take it up the river. Jump off at any stop that looks interesting.”—TripAdvisor Member, Berlin, Germany

Chao Phraya River Tourist Boat, Sathorn Pier, Central Pier, 2 623 6001

What's the TOUR

How to Get Around



"You can hire a local tour guide for any particular site you wish to visit. They are easy to find outside each site. Your hotel concierge can arrange a guide, but you will pay more and won't necessarily have a better time."—TripAdvisor Member

"We found that each site had a brochure in English, so a guide isn't required for a positive experience. Sometimes it's best just to walk around at your own pace and take in the sights, sounds and smells on your own."—TripAdvisor Member

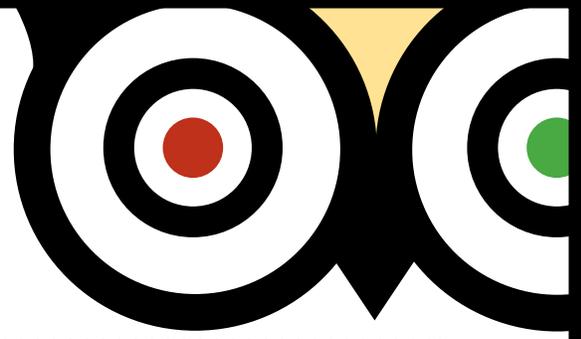
"If you're in a minibus or taxi, tell the driver you'll tip him if he keeps the speed below 90/100 kph!"—TripAdvisor Member

"The Skytrain is the best. The stations are well manned with lots of security, shops and friendly staff who speak English. The trains are on time, very fast, clean, air-conditioned, cheap and easy to navigate. We used the train to get everywhere and loved it!"—TripAdvisor Member

"Tuk tuks, the small bicycle-like touring vehicles, are very cheap and sometimes a little faster to snake through traffic, but the smog can be a killer. When you take a tuk tuk, always agree on a price before you start your journey, and a small tip goes a long way." —TripAdvisor Member



WHERE to eat



FAMILIES

“The quality of the food and the service that you get at The **Rain Tree** is simply the best in town. The variety of the buffet is incredible and cannot be fresher.”—TripAdvisor Member, Brussels, Belgium

The Rain Tree Cafe, Plaza Athenee Bangkok, 61 Wireless Road, 2 650 8800

“My husband and our 2 teenagers had a nice lunch **Bankara Ramen**. The food was tasty and the soup bowls were huge. I loved the condiments on the table. Lots of choices on the menu, too.”—TripAdvisor Member, Tahlequah, Okla.

Bankara Ramen, Sukumvit 39, Wattana, 2 662 5162 3

At **Crepes & Co.**, you'll find “delicious crepes with savory and sweet fillings, as well as several Mediterranean and North African dishes.”—TripAdvisor Member

Crepes & Co., 18/1 Sukhumvit Soi 12, 2 653 3990

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ROMANCE

“We ate at **Thiptara** on our first night in Bangkok, and it was a very pleasant introduction to Thailand. The service was friendly, the food was excellent and the venue beautiful. It was lovely watching the boats go by on the river.”—TripAdvisor Member, Castle Hedingham, U.K.

Thiptara, The Peninsula Hotel, 333 Charoennakorn Road, 2 861 2888

“Located on the top floor of the Oriental Hotel, the **Normandie's** dining room offers fabulous views of the Chao Phrya River and its fantastically lit boats. We had a great meal, great service and really enjoyed the elegant atmosphere.”—TripAdvisor Member, Moscow, Russia

Le Normandie, Mandarin Oriental, 48 Oriental Ave., 2 659 9000

“You will enjoy the view of the city with a very romantic dinner” at **Sirocco**, on the 64th floor of State Tower. “They have a live band. The food is fine. You should make a reservation about one month in advance.”—TripAdvisor Member, Bangkok

Sirocco, 1055 Silom Road, State Tower, 2 624 9555

“Just go for it!”

BUDGET

“For cheap and lovely Thai food, we tried **Polo**—famous for their fried chicken. We had a whole chicken served with flakes of fried garlic on top, very yummy. For a family of four, it cost us only 280 Baht for lunch. We ate in the open air part although they have a/c dining as well.”—TripAdvisor Member, Melbourne, Australia

Polo Fried Chicken, 137/1-3 Soi Polo, Wireless Road, Lumpini, 2 655 8489

“My favorite place to eat is the food court at the **Emporium**. A bit upscale but loads of choices. One seating area has views over the Queen's Park next door.”—TripAdvisor Member, Phuket, Thailand

Emporium Food Court, Emporium Shopping Centre, 5th Floor, 622 Sukhumvit Road, Klongton, Klongtoey

“The **Queen of Curry** is basic but very clean and has good food. We had great satay and exceptional chicken penang curry. With two large beers, it was still a bargain! Do not hesitate—just go for it!”—TripAdvisor Member, Liverpool, U.K.

Queen of Curry, 49 Charoenkrung Road Soi 50, Bongrak, 86 559 7711

WHERE to eat



HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

Yes, you read the name right: It's **Cabbages and Condoms**. "The food was excellent. It's nothing smutty, just to promote condoms being as readily available as cabbages!"—TripAdvisor Member, Knebworth, Hertfordshire, England

Cabbages and Condoms, 10 Sukhumvit Soi 12, 2 229 4610

Vegetarian cuisine is the specialty at **May Kaidee's**, a local chain consisting of three restaurants and a cooking school. "Low-key and some of the best Thai food you'll ever eat. And vegan!"—TripAdvisor Member

May Kaidee's, 33 Samsen Road Soi 1, 89 137 3173 (main location)

"As a vegetarian, I find it hard to eat Thai food, usually being limited to only a couple of menu items. **Na Aroon** was a real find! The menu was amazing, the ambiance lovely and the food very tasty."—TripAdvisor Member, Melbourne, Australia

Na Aroon, Ariyasom Villa Hotel, 65 Sukhumvit Soi 1, 2 254 8880 3

"...traditional Thai music and dancing."

HIDDEN GEMS

If ambiance is important, head to **Eat Me**, where the artistic surroundings complement light Thai meals, such as "carrot soup with coconut cream, double cherry duck with cranberry mashed potatoes and mixed asparagus, zucchini and broccoli."—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

Eat Me, Soi Pipat 2, 2 238 0931

Escape the bustle at **The Mango Tree**, a quiet retreat with a garden. It's "an amazing restaurant" with "great food with traditional Thai music and dancing."—TripAdvisor Member, Newcastle, England

The Mango Tree, 37 Silom Soi 6, 2 236 2820

"**Methavalai Sorndaeng** takes you back to a time when dining out was a dress-up occasion. The servers are dressed in traditional costume, the decor is from the 60s and the food is scrumptious. We shared unbelievable duck with red curry, stir-fried broccoli with scallops and the best Pad Thai anywhere."—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Methavalai Sorndaeng, 78/2 Ratchadamnoen Klang Tai, 2 224 3088

SPECIAL EVENTS



Don't miss the biggest party in town at **Silom Soi 4 Halloween**, where revelers dress up in elaborate costumes, from the "ween"—or scary—to the just plain outrageous. Businesses and bars deck out for the occasion while party-goers dance through the night. (October 31)

Silom Soi 4 Halloween, Various venues on Silom Soi 4, <http://www.silomsoi4.net>

Open your eyes to cutting edge cinema at the annual **World Film Festival**, featuring over 80 independent and art house films, in addition to Q&A sessions with the filmmakers and stars. (November 4 – 13)

World Film Festival, Siam Paragon, 991/1 Rama 1 Road, 2 338 3618 9 <http://www.worldfilmbkk.com>

Watch the "colorful water" at **Loi Krathong**, when the Chao Phraya River lights up with illuminated boats and bank side performances and displays. (November 10)

Loi Krathong, Chao Phraya River, <http://www.loikrathong.net>

Run, kayak, cycle and swim through some of Bangkok's most gorgeous scenery at the **Yara Bangkok Challenge**, winding past rice paddies, monuments and canals. Categories include men's, women's, seniors and mixed. (November 12)

Yara Bangkok Challenge, Fishing Park, Minsiri Resort, Nong Chok, <http://bangkokchallenge.com>

Lace up and get moving at the **Bangkok Marathon**, a grueling hot and humid race past some of Bangkok's most famous sites. In addition to the marathon there are also quarter-marathon and 5K events. (November 20)

Standard Chartered Bangkok Marathon, Sanam Chai Road the front of The Royal Grand Palace, <http://www.bkkmarathon.com>

Wear yellow to honor the longest reigning King of Thailand on his **birthday**, when the streets around Ratchadamnoen and Sanam Luang come to life with music, food, vivid flowers and fireworks. (December 5)

Birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Ratchadamnoen and Sanam Luang

Where to STAY



FAMILIES

For “luxury and service beyond belief,” check into the **InterContinental Bangkok**. “We ate in their casual lobby dining one evening and requested something that wasn’t even on the menu for the kids, and they accommodated in their friendly Thai way.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

InterContinental Bangkok, 973 Ploenchit Road, 2 656 0444

“The **Ariyasomvilla** is the nicest hotel we have ever stayed in. Beautifully designed & landscaped with lots of colour, comfortable furnishings and personal touches. Our son spent hours swimming and playing, or drinking fresh fruit smoothies by the pool’s edge.”—TripAdvisor Member, Sydney, Australia

Ariyasomvilla Hotel, 65 Sukhumvit Soi 1, Klongtoey Nua, 2 254 8880

“The pool area at the **Pullman** was fabulous. There was a small Jacuzzi, as well, along with a separate kids pool. The hotel even had feeding time for the fish on the hotel premises. The breakfast and dinner buffets were great—you won’t stop eating.”—TripAdvisor Member, New Dehli, India

Pullman Bangkok King Power, 8/2 Rangnam Road, Thanon-Phayathai, Ratchathewi, 2 680 9999

ROMANCE

At the **Shangri-La Hotel**, “the room was very spacious, and the view was superb. Sitting on the balcony while the sun sets and watching the river traffic was very romantic. The two pools are almost an oasis set back from the river.”—TripAdvisor Member, England

Shangri-La Hotel, 89 Soi Wat Suan Plu, New Road, Bangrak, 2 236 7777

“My wife and I spent the last day of our honeymoon at **Sheraton Grande Sukhumvit**. There was a honeymoon cake and letter from the management waiting in our room. Excellent detail! The soothing pool area, especially the jacuzzi, is amazing in the middle of the hectic city.”—TripAdvisor Member, Helsinki, Finland

Sheraton Grande Sukhumvit, 250 Sukhumvit Road, 2 649 8888

“Our room at the **Peninsula Bangkok** was a perfect size for a couple, and the added balcony gave a feeling of more space. It was certainly a delight to be able to step outside in the evenings with a quiet drink and watch the barges go by on the river.”—TripAdvisor Member, Beijing, China

Peninsula Bangkok, 333 Charoennakom Road, Klongsan, 2 861 2888

BUDGET

“I cannot believe the value at the **Bangkok Loft Inn**. Super helpful staff, very good breakfast with lots of choices, complimentary airport pick up and huge, comfy beds! All in all, it gave us a great start to our trip.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, U.K.

Bangkok Loft Inn, 55 Somdet Phra Chao Taksin Road, Bangyeerua, Thonburi, 2 862 0492

“If you’re looking for a great, clean and unique place with great staff, **Phranakorn-Nornlen** is the place for you. Decorated with a splendid vintage touch without feeling old. The hallway looks like an old Thai steet. The attention to detail is simply mind-boggling.”—TripAdvisor Member, Tel-Aviv, Israel

Phranakorn-Nornlen Hotel, 46 Krungkaseam, Thewet Soi 1, Bangkhunprom, 2 628 8188 x90

Lamphu Tree House “has much more flair than others in the price range. Our standard room by far exceeded our budget expectations. Everything was brand new, immaculately clean and, above all, very well designed with a nice traditional Thai touch.”—TripAdvisor Member, Frankfurt, Germany

Lamphu Tree House, 155 Wanchat Bridge, Phachatipai Road, Phanakhon, 2 282 09912

LUXURY

The **Mandarin Oriental Bangkok** offers “professional, faultless service from start to finish. Early morning carrot juice delivered on the dot. Shoes shined daily without asking. Laundry collected and delivered without the form filling. Superb dinner on the terrace. Up-to-date room with balcony overlooking river, with an old-world feel.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

Mandarin Oriental Bangkok, 48 Oriental Ave., 2 659 9000

At **Lebua at State Tower**, “the rooms were spacious, with lovely river views, and were a welcome respite from the rather hectic street scene. Large pool, great workout facility and amenable staff ready to respond to your every wish. As I told my wife, ‘Honey, now you know what it is like to be a rock star.’”—TripAdvisor Member, Stockholm, Sweden

Lebua at State Tower, 1055 Silom Road, State Tower, Bangrak, 2 624 9999

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“The **Sukhothai** has been ranked among the best hotels in the world. I understand why. Not many comments are necessary to describe this perfect place in Bangkok: quiet in a noisy city, elegant and delicate.”—TripAdvisor Member, Paris, France

The Sukhothai Bangkok, 13/3 South Sathorn Road, 2 344 8888

Where to **STAY**



HIDDEN GEMS

"I had a really good time at **Baan Sukhumvit Inn**, as if it were my own place. The staff was extremely friendly and helpful; the room, clean and comfortable. Even though the hotel is on the Sukhumvit business area road, I found it magically peaceful and attractive."—TripAdvisor Member, Fribourg, Switzerland

Baan Sukhumvit Inn, 392/38-39 Sukhumvit Soi 20 Sukhumvit Road, Klongtoey, 2 258 5622

"...magically peaceful and attractive."

Old Bangkok Inn is "a small boutique hotel with a personal touch. We stayed in the Lemongrass room, which might be not exactly spacious, but has a lot of charm. The room has a small terrace where you can forget that you are in a big, hectic city. The breakfast was huge and tasty. The staff are really nice, sweet and helpful."—TripAdvisor Member, Berlin, Germany

Old Bangkok Inn, 607 Pra Sumen Road, Phra Nakhon, 2 629 1787

Baan Chantra is "more than a hotel—it's a home away from home. What makes this place truly stand out from all the other places we've ever stayed in is the people that run it. Nothing was too much trouble. Go for the Thai breakfasts. While eating curry for breakfast may sound weird or even scary, they are really delicious. The coffee here is the best in town!"—TripAdvisor Member, Netherlands

Baan Chantra, 120/1 Samsen Road, 2 628 6988 9

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