

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the left.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a valid national license, an International Driving Permit (IDP), vehicle registration and proof of insurance. An IDP must be obtained prior to arrival in Thailand.
- ❑ Carrying a passport is recommended. Identification may be requested at any time; official requirements for a visitor's presence in Thailand is subject to change without notice.
- ❑ Thailand has one of the world's highest rates of traffic-related fatalities.
- ❑ There are large numbers of motorcycles and powered two-wheeled vehicles; drivers and passengers of these vehicles account for an estimated 74% of traffic deaths.
- ❑ Pedestrians are at high risk. Infrastructure is inadequate. Drivers of motorized vehicles, including public transport, typically ignore the presence of those on foot. Use pedestrian bridges and elevated walkways whenever available.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is below 0.05 g/dl for general population, and below 0.02 g/dl for young or novice drivers. Despite legal limits, drink driving is a common factor in many serious and fatal crashes.
- ❑ Rates of alcohol, amphetamine and other stimulant use is high among drivers of commercial vehicles, including large trucks.
- ❑ There are 30.5 road deaths per 100,000 people in Thailand, compared to 2.2 in Sweden and 2.3 in the UK.

ROAD CULTURE

- **Speeding** and reckless road behavior is widespread.
- **Failure to comply** with traffic laws and rules is common in all regions.
- **Motorists** may drive against the flow of traffic, even on highways.
- **Drivers** frequently disregard stop signs and traffic lights.
- **There is** a high rate of driver and pedestrian distraction from the use of mobile devices.
- **Aggressive** road behavior and dangerous overtaking is common. Motorists frequently flash their headlights while tailgating another driver.
- **When merging** into traffic on highways, many drivers entering from side roads fail to yield to existing traffic traveling at high speeds.
- **Many motorists** operate vehicles that are not roadworthy, or which lack standard safety features including working brakes, adequate tires, headlights, tail lights, turn signals, horns and windshield wipers.
- **Driver** fatigue is common.
- **Motorcycle** and scooter riders often fail to wear safety helmets.
- **Motorcycle** and scooter drivers weave among traffic and drive on sidewalks during rush hour or when traffic is heavy.

ROAD CONDITIONS

- **There are** 180,053 km (111,879 miles) of roads, including 450 km (279 miles) of expressways.
- **Traffic is** chaotic in and around cities and on highways. There are high numbers of motorcycles and motorbikes. Road users may include a mix of cars, pedestrians, buses, taxis, large transport trucks, pick-up trucks (songthaews or "red trucks"), animal carts, elephants, tuk-tuks/samlaws (motorized rickshaws) and bicycle rickshaws.
- **Some expressways** are toll roads, including the Bangkok Expressway and highways 7, 9 and 34.
- **Signs** for major roads are generally in Thai and English.
- **Traffic jams** are common, especially in and near cities.
- **Paved roads** link most cities; many are only two lanes.
- **The condition** of paved roads varies widely. Expressways are generally in good condition; the surfaces of other paved roads may be broken or have large potholes.
- **Beyond** cities and in northern regions, roads are generally in poor condition. A four-wheel drive vehicle may be required.
- **Roads** are poorly lit or unlit, and many vehicles do not have working headlights. Avoid driving after dark.
- **Do not** drive on mountain roads during the rainy season, particularly at night.



Source: CIA Factbook



Road Conditions, continued

- **In urban areas**, two-way roads may become one-way at certain times of the day.
- **Tolls** are paid via the M-Pass, Easy Pass or M-Flow Thailand electronic systems, which require registering a vehicle's registration number on the corresponding website or mobile app. Verify with rental agency that vehicle is registered for payment; in general, tolls for non-member vehicles may also be paid online within two days of toll road use.
- **Pedestrian** infrastructure is poor. Pedestrians are at high risk in all areas.
- **Cycling** is not recommended. There are few cycle lanes. Even dedicated cycle lanes are often used by motorcycles and other motorized vehicles.
- **Road hazards** include large, slow-moving trucks that limit the visibility of other drivers and encourage unsafe passing.
- **There are** many stray dogs on roadways, even in cities. In rural areas, dogs may sleep on roads and streets.
- **Volatile** public protests are common. Even peaceful demonstrations may suddenly turn violent. Avoid all public gatherings and follow the advice of authorities.
- **Demonstrations** and protests may disrupt road travel and public transport.
- **There is** ongoing political tension and unpredictable security in southern provinces, where deadly attacks have occurred. Motorists should avoid all travel to Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and the Southern Songkhla province (except areas north of and including the A43 road between Hat Yai and Sakom, and areas northwest of the rail line between Hat Yai and Pedang Besar).
- **Clashes** involving security forces and armed criminal groups occur along the border with Myanmar.
- **Not all** land crossings into Laos are open to visitors.
- **Avoid** travel to areas along the Cambodian border. There are active land mines, particularly around Ta Krabey.
- **All roads** on the islands of Koh Samui and Koh Pha-Ngan are regarded as dangerous due to surface conditions and road culture.
- The following roads may present particular challenges to motorists:
 - » **Wireless Road and Sukhumvit Road** in front of the US Embassy in Bangkok are both regarded as highly dangerous places for pedestrians, even in marked crosswalks. High numbers of serious and fatal injuries occur here. Use extreme caution and look both ways when crossing these roads.
 - » **Route 1090/Death Highway** along the border with Myanmar (Burma) links the small towns of Mae Sot and Umphang. This narrow, 164-km (101.9-mile) scenic route is popular with tourists, and has heavy motorcycle and truck traffic. Truck drivers may speed and behave recklessly or with aggression. Many motorcycles and motorbikes are driven by visiting drivers unfamiliar with traffic rules and mountain driving conditions. Traffic crashes and fatalities, including bus crashes, are common. The steep, winding route is poorly maintained and is subject to dense fog. Roads become slippery after rain. Avoid this road.
 - » **The Curve of 100 Bodies** is a section of curving road in front of the Ratchada Shrine in Bangkok. It is the site of frequent serious and fatal crashes. Speeding and over-steering into the curve are regarded as the most common causes of crashes. Drivers often travel at high speeds through a tunnel on the road's inbound lane leading toward the city; the tunnel exit opens into the curve. Over-correction at this point results in many crashes. Safety measures including the installation of guard rails and signs warning motorists to lower their speeds have been added to this part of the road.

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	80 kph (50 mph)
Rural roads	90 kph (55 mph)
Highways	120 kph (74 mph)

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

								
No overtaking zone	Stop	Left lanes end	Side road junction on left	High occupancy vehicles only	No overtaking	Yield to traffic ahead	Lane changes prohibited	Twisting road

Road Conditions, continued

- » **Multiple tunnels** in and near Bangkok including the tunnel beneath Din Daeng intersection, the Bang Phlat intersection tunnel, the Huai Khwang tunnel and the Kaset intersection tunnel have frequent crashes. Causes include speeding drivers changing lanes on curving roads within the tunnels, poor or no lighting, slippery road surfaces, and flooding after heavy rains.

REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **Drink driving** and road crashes increase around New Year (Jan. 1) and Thai New Year (Songkran, mid-April).
- **Thailand** is subject to heavy rains/monsoons, storms, flooding, landslides, earthquakes, tremors and tsunamis.
- **Mainland** monsoon season is generally from May to October. On the island of Koh Samui and in southeast regions, rainy season is from November to March.
- **During** periods of heavy rains, many roads become impassable.
- **Intense rains** often result in flash floods. Do not drive or step into floodwaters. Strong currents may sweep away a vehicle; floodwater may obscure deep potholes, branches or other road hazards.
- **The Mekong River** banks are prone to seasonal floods.
- **Earthquakes** and tremors of varying magnitude are common in northern regions.
- **Seismic activity** may be followed by a tsunami.
- **Be familiar with emergency procedures.** The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

TRANSPORTATION

- **Transportation** options include cars, limousine services, buses, minibuses, metro, taxis, motorcycle taxis, tuk-tuks, bicycles rickshaws, songthaews (red or brightly painted pick-up trucks), rideshare services, trains and boats.
- **When renting** a vehicle, be alert to scams that illegally require you to leave your passport with the rental agency as collateral to pay for fictitious damages.
- **Smartphone-based** hire vehicle services are available in Bangkok and some other large cities. All services are affiliated with registered taxi companies. Use only services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver's name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- **Public transport** in Bangkok is well-developed and regarded as generally reliable. The city has the

country's only rapid transit system, which includes the BTS Skytrain, underground MRT (Metropolitan Rapid Transit), and Suvarnabhumi Rail Airport Link (ARL).

- **Beyond** Bangkok, public transport is limited to tuk-tuks, motorcycle taxis, bicycle rickshaws and songthaews.
- **When using** public transport, stay close to other travelers and leave detailed travel plans with a trusted person. If possible, avoid traveling alone.
- **Except** for Bangkok, city bus services are insufficient. Most bus lines serve routes connecting cities.
- **Use only** limousine services or licensed taxis at official taxi stands or booked in advance via phone or online.
- **Even in** taxis with meters, drivers may refuse to activate meter unless directed to do so by passengers.
- **Many** taxi meters are malfunctioning. Agree on fare prior to travel.
- **Taxi drivers** may not speak or read English. Carry a copy of your destination written in the local language.
- **Many taxis** are not fitted with rear seat safety belts. Ensure a rear safety belt is available.
- **Do not** enter a taxi already occupied by others. Insist that driver not pick up additional fares.
- **Unlicensed** taxis have black-and-white plates, are not insured, and are not equipped with meters.
- **Motorcycle taxis** are popular, but are regarded as unsafe. Drivers often weave in and out of traffic. Helmets may not be supplied to passengers, or may not meet safety standards.
- **Tuk-tuks** are widely available. There are no seat belts. Reckless and aggressive driver behavior is common.
- **Tuk-tuk** drivers may refuse passengers or attempt to charge excessive fees. Request that driver use meter, or agree on fare prior to travel.
- **Songthaew** pick-up trucks (often called "red trucks," though color may vary) provide the only transportation option in many areas. Some trucks have enclosed truck beds with two rows of facing seats that are not fitted with seat belts. In some songthaews, particularly in rural areas or small towns, passengers are required to stand unprotected in truck beds.
- **Songthaews** are flagged on the street. Drivers are paid in cash when passengers disembark.
- **Bicycle** rickshaws share roadways with large motorized vehicle. Drivers may be untrained.
- **Bicycle** rickshaws, tuk-tuks and songthaews are unsafe.
- **Trains** are operated by the State Railway of Thailand. There are four main routes to the north, northeast, east and south. All lines intersect in the capital city.
- **Trains** include ordinary, rapid and express routes.



Transportation, continued

- **Numerous** train derailments have occurred.
- **Avoid** the rail line linking Hat Yai and Pedang Besar due to ongoing safety issues, including violent attacks.
- **Passenger boats** operated by multiple companies provide routes between the mainland and Thai islands. There have been many sinkings and collisions that have resulted in fatalities.
- **Vessels are** often overloaded and poorly maintained. Avoid overloaded boats, rough seas, stormy weather conditions, or boats that show signs of poor condition.
- **Boats may** not be equipped with working navigational equipment, adequate numbers of life vests and other emergency gear. If traveling by boat, bring your own life preserver.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Traffic regulations** are poorly enforced.
- **Drivers must** be at least 18 years of age to drive, and a minimum of 21 to rent a vehicle. Some rental agencies may have additional restrictions.
- **Seat belt** use mandatory for driver and all passengers.
- **Children are not** restricted from sitting in the front seats of vehicles. For safety, children should be seated

in rear seats, and should be secured with an age-appropriate restraint.

- **Helmet use** is compulsory for motorcycle/motorbike drivers and passengers. Helmets must be fastened.
- **Approximately** 51% of motorcycle/motorbike drivers and 20% of passengers wear helmets.
- **Children** are not restricted from being passengers on motorcycles or other motorized two-wheeled vehicles. If possible, children should not be passengers on these vehicles.
- **When two** vehicles reach an intersection at the same time, the vehicle on the left has right of way.
- **Drivers** must signal their intent to overtake.
- **Before** changing lanes, motorists must use a turn signal or hand signal to alert other road users.
- **Drivers are** legally required to stop for pedestrians in a crosswalk. This law is frequently ignored.
- **It is illegal** to park next to curbs that are painted red, yellow or white.
- **Fines may** be imposed by traffic police for driving too slowly in regular lanes of traffic.
- **Police may** carry out random breath tests.

Bangkok (Capital)

- » Transportation options include cars, limousine services, buses, metro, taxis, motorcycle taxis, tuk-tuks, bicycle rickshaws, songthaews (red or brightly painted pick-up trucks), rideshare services, trains and boats.
- » Driving is not recommended. Traffic is dense and unruly.
- » The city is ranked as one of the most traffic congested in the world.
- » Parking is difficult to find.
- » Pedestrians are at high risk, even at official crosswalks. Many drivers ignore crossings and pedestrians.
- » Whenever available, use pedestrian bridges and elevated walkways to cross streets.
- » There are few cycling paths. Bicyclists face many hazards, including poor surfaces, speeding drivers, and road users who disregard cyclists.
- » Hualamphong Station is the main transport hub.
- » The bus network is extensive, with approximately 100 routes. Buses are typically overcrowded. At bus stops, buses must be hailed by waving at driver. Fares are paid in cash onboard.
- » It is common for bus drivers to be reckless and to disregard passenger safety.
- » The BTS Skytrain city mass transit system and underground MRT (Metropolitan Rapid Transit) trains are air-conditioned and regarded as generally reliable.
- » The BTS and MRT are often faster than road transport due to heavy city traffic.
- » There are two MRT lines: Blue and Purple. Trains operate from 6 am to midnight every five minutes during peak commuter hours, and approximately every ten minutes at other times.
- » Tokens for the MRT can be purchased at machines in stations.
- » MRT is connected to the BTS trains at Asok, Mo Chit and Sala Daeng stations.
- » There are two BTS lines: Sukhumvit and Silom lines.
- » Older ticket machines at stations accept only coins; new machines accept notes.

Bangkok, continued

- » Single-day and multi-trip BTS cards are available at machines and staffed ticket booths.
- » BTS trains run from approximately 5:15 am to midnight (or just after).
- » BTS connects to BRT express bus service at Chong Nonsi, and to Chao Phraya Express river boat service at Saphan Taksin. There is also a connection to the Saen Saeb canal boat at Ratchathewi.
- » Trials are underway for a new monorail system (BSR) established by the Eastern Bangkok Monorail Company Limited (EBM).
- » Use only limousine services or licensed taxis at official taxis stands or booked in advance via phone or online.
- » Even in taxis with meters, drivers may refuse to activate meter unless directed to do so by passengers.
- » Many taxi meters are out of order. Agree on fare prior to travel.
- » Taxi drivers may not speak or read English. Carry a copy of your destination written in the local language.
- » Many taxis are not fitted with rear seat safety belts. Before entering taxi, ensure a rear safety belt is available.
- » Do not enter a taxi already occupied by other passengers. Insist that driver not pick up additional fares.
- » Unlicensed taxis have black-and-white plates, are not insured, and are not equipped with meters.
- » Motorcycle taxis are popular, but are regarded as unsafe. Drivers often weave in and out of traffic. Helmets may not be supplied to passengers, or may not meet safety standards.
- » Taxi and tuk-tuk drivers may refuse passengers or attempt to charge excessive fees. Request that driver use meter, or agree on fare prior to travel.
- » Songthaew pick-up trucks are popular alternatives to taxis. Some trucks have enclosed truck beds with two rows of facing bench seats. Seats are not fitted with seat belts.
- » Passengers may be required to stand unprotected in truck beds in some songthaews.
- » Many songthaews are painted red, but not exclusively. Other colors may correspond to specific routes.
- » Bicycle rickshaws share roadways with large motorized vehicles. Drivers may be untrained.
- » Smartphone-based hire vehicle services are available. All services are affiliated with registered taxi companies. Use only services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver's name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- » Trains are operated by the State Railway of Thailand. All four main routes intersect in Bangkok.
- » Trains services include ordinary, rapid and express.
- » Numerous train derailments have occurred.
- » Many passenger boats are unsafe. There have been many sinkings and collisions that have resulted in fatalities. Boats may be poorly maintained and overcrowded, and lack adequate navigational and life-saving equipment.
- » Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport/New Bangkok International Airport is 30 km (18.6 miles) east of the city.
- » Use only taxis or public transportation at official pick-up areas, cars from limousine counters, or transport sent by your hotel.
- » Public taxi drivers are certified by Airports of Thailand and are less than five years old. Obtain tickets from the taxi queue machine at the Contact Taxi counter on Level 1/Ground Level; go to the lane number printed on ticket.
- » For limousines, go to the Limousine Service Counter on the second floor of the arrivals area. Vehicles are managed by Airports of Thailand limousine operations.
- » The Suvarnabhumi Rail Airport Link (ARL) commuter train connects from the airport train station to Phaya Thai (BTS) Station via Makkasan Station (MRT Phetchaburi). Follow Airport Link signs.
- » ARL trains run from 6 am to midnight daily, approximately every ten minutes during peak hours, and every 15 minutes off-peak and on weekends.
- » Public buses to the city are available 24 hours a day.
- » Long distance bus routes connect the airport to other provinces including Pattaya, Talad Rong Kluea and NongKhai.
- » A free shuttle bus service connects the terminal buildings to the transportation center and bus terminal.
- » Most major car rental agencies are represented at the airport.

Chiang Mai

- » Second largest city. Transportation options include cars, limousine services, buses, taxis, motorcycle taxis, tuk-tuks, bicycle rickshaws, pick-up trucks, rideshare services, trains and boats.
- » Driving is not recommended. Traffic is heavy and chaotic. A wide range of road users includes large and small motorized vehicles, bicycles, bicycle-powered vehicles, animal riders and animal-drawn carts.
- » Pedestrians should use extreme caution, even at official crosswalks. It is common for drivers to ignore crossings and pedestrians.
- » Use pedestrian bridges and elevated walkways to cross streets when they are available.
- » There are few cycling paths. Cycling is a high-risk activity; bicyclists must navigate poor surfaces and share roads with speeding drivers, high numbers of weaving motorcyclists and large trucks.
- » City bus routes are limited. The Chiang Mai Municipality Bus operates three lines connecting areas of the city and the airport.
- » Bus schedules are unreliable. Service for specific routes is frequently canceled.
- » There are two main bus stations: Arcade Bus Station and Chang Phuak Bus Station.
- » City routes are limited, but daily bus routes connect to Bangkok and other long distance destinations.
- » Many buses are air-conditioned.
- » Motorcycle taxis and tuk-tuks are the primary form of transport, but are regarded as unsafe. Drivers often weave in and out of traffic. Helmets may not be supplied to passengers, or may not meet safety standards.
- » Taxi and tuk-tuk drivers may refuse passengers or attempt to charge excessive fees.
- » Tuk-tuks are near the Tha Pae Gate area and at main tourist sites. Fares should be negotiated prior to travel.
- » Motorcycle taxis can be found on street corners and near tourist sites. Drivers wear brightly colored vests.
- » Songthaew pick-up trucks are popular alternatives to taxis. Some trucks have enclosed truck beds with two rows of facing bench seats. Seats are not fitted with seat belts. Passengers may be required to stand unprotected in truck beds in some songthaews.
- » Songthaews may be flagged down, or found parked along many roadsides or at shopping centers.
- » Songthaews may cover specific routes. Color of vehicle determines route.
- » Bicycle rickshaws share roadways with large motorized vehicles. Drivers may be untrained.
- » Use only limousine services or licensed taxis at official taxis stands or booked in advance via phone or online.
- » Even in taxis with meters, drivers may refuse to activate meter unless directed to do so by passengers.
- » There are few private taxis. Available taxis have lights in the window. Taxis should be booked via phone, or may be found in ranks at transport stations, shopping centers and hotels.
- » Many taxi meters are out of order. Agree on fare prior to travel.
- » Taxi drivers may not speak or read English. Carry a copy of your destination written in the local language.
- » Many taxis are not fitted with rear seat safety belts. Before entering taxi, ensure a rear safety belt is available.
- » Do not enter a taxi already occupied by other passengers. Insist that driver not pick up additional fares.
- » Unlicensed taxis have black-and-white plates, are not insured, and are not equipped with meters.
- » Smartphone-based hire vehicle services are available. All services are affiliated with registered taxi companies. Use only services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver's name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- » The main train station is Chiang Mai station.
- » Trains are operated by the State Railway of Thailand. Service includes rapid, express and special express routes. There is regular train service, including overnight routes, between the city and Bangkok. Overnight routes include sleeper cars.
- » Chiang Mai Train Station is 2 km (1.2 miles) from city center on the far side of the Ping River.
- » The city is the last rail stop on the Northern Line.
- » Train tickets should be purchased in advance.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **There are** few provisions for persons with mobility or other physical challenges.
- **Sidewalks** and street crossings present difficulties for travelers with mobility issues. Where present, sidewalks have uneven or broken surfaces, and may be used by motorcycle and motorbike riders. Pedestrian crossings are unsafe and often ignored by motorists.
- **Though required** by law, accessibility to buildings, facilities and transportation may not be enforced. In many areas, wheelchair access to buildings and stations is limited due to uneven paving and lack of lifts or ramps. This includes buses and public transit systems.
- **Many taxis** have limited storage space for wheelchairs.
- **There are** few designated parking accommodations for persons with mobility challenges. Drivers should seek a parking lot or garage with attendants, who will generally provide assistance if asked, or for a fee.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Responders to emergency numbers** in remote areas may not speak English.
- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
 - » Police: 191 or 911
 - » Emergency medical services/ambulance: 1669
 - » Fire: 199
- **Responses** to emergency situations, including urgent medical treatment, may be slow or non-existent outside of cities and major urban areas. Dense city traffic may impede the ability of emergency medical responses.
- **Ambulances** are not available in most areas of the country. In Bangkok and other cities, ambulance services are unreliable. A taxi or private vehicle may be a better option for reaching a major hospital.
- **Adequate medical** care is available only in and near major cities. In general, medical treatment and facilities are available in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket and Pattaya, including emergency, long-term and routine health care.
- **Only basic** medical services are available in rural areas.
- **English-speaking** medical providers are rare throughout the country, and are generally unavailable in rural areas.
- **Hospitals** and medical providers require payment prior to the administration of care. Credit cards may not be accepted. Patients are also responsible for all costs of transfer between hospitals and medical facilities.
- **If involved in a crash:**
 - » Call police. Contact insurance company for request guidance in dealing with police and Thai authorities.
 - » Do not move vehicle until directed to do so by authorities, unless it poses a danger to other road users.
 - » Take photos of crash scene if possible.
 - » Collect contact information from other driver(s) and any witnesses.
 - » Obtain a copy of police report for insurance and rental car agencies.



ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL (ASIRT)

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

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