Despite political upheaval, floods and economic downturns, there is simply no stopping the fabulous capital of old Siam.

As a testament to its timeless appeal, Bangkok remains firmly on the jet set circuit, and not just for sheer style-for-dollar value. The Big Mango is impossible to beat for exceptional and affordable medical and dental care, superb (and safe) street food, affordable fine dining, world-class shopping, luxurious accommodation and exemplary service. Yes, the traffic can drive you nuts, but simply do as we do and aim to be poolside with cocktails at peak times and you’ll understand why it’s one of our all time favorite destinations worldwide.
Nov-Feb is the best time to visit, it’s oven-hot between Mar-May and rainy Jun-Oct with occasional floods.

Suvarnabhumi Airport to town: 45 mins / 350 baht by cab incl. tolls, traffic dependent; 1500 baht by limo (see Drab vs Fab); Airport Rail Link: 15 mins / 100 baht (Express) to Makkasan terminus (around 1km north of Sukhumvit Soi 1).

Certain public holidays eg. Buddhist holidays and election days mean no alcohol in restos and bars.

Songkran Festival (mid Apr) is a nightmare of filthy khlong water, flour and ‘get the farang’ ie. you, and is best avoided like the plague; whereas Loi Krathong Festival (Nov) is a magical joy, don’t miss it. Check out www.tourismthailand.org for more info.

You may sometimes need ID to get into larger clubs/bars accidents – from Golden Bird Limousine & Car Rentals, Smoking is not allowed in all venues with air-con.

Cash? Relax – there are ATMs situated everywhere.

Have plenty of small denominations for taxis.

Odd sois (streets) on one side, evens on the other – easy!

Tuk-tuks – once fun, twice shy. If you like having frizzy hair, a filthy face and reeking of gas – go right ahead.

Taxis – dirt cheap, but no meter, no go. Brightly colored cabs (eg. hot pink) tend to be newer and comfier.

BTS Skytrain – great for traffic-free shuttling above central Bangkok, especially during peak hours when the traffic jams can beggar belief.

Don’t fiddle with the monks, point with your feet or pass remarks about the Royal Family.

There are dress codes in temples and shrines – bare shoulders, shoes and shorty shorts are no-no’s; so no mink hotpants, and wear easily-removed footwear.

Confusingly the G/F is sometimes the 1/F and sometimes not.

The intl code for Thailand is +66, Bangkok is 2, once there, dial 02 for local landlines, 08 for local mobiles.

Emergency 191; tourist police 115; tourist info 1672.
Krissada has been a leading figure in Thailand’s independent music and movie scene for the past 12 years, winning multiple awards and accolades including Best Thai Artist with his band Pru at the MTV Asia Awards. His first solo album is due for release in late 2012. In collaboration with famed designer Bill Bensley, June 2012 saw the launch of Kriss’s latest venture, The Siam, Bangkok’s most luxurious urban retreat featuring 39 exclusive suites located on the banks of the Chao Phraya river.

[thesiamhotel.com]
1) What do you think are the most underrated spots in Bangkok? What makes them special?

I would name three. One is our parks – we don’t have many but if you want to see real Thai life with the city’s array of people then head to Lumphini Park at dusk or dawn. Two is the river – one becomes the traveler rather than the tourist when you take a boat and see city life on the river and through our canals. In a way you’re almost going back into time. Three is simply seeing the Grand Palace by night – it’s spectacular when lit up and with less traffic at night, a car ride on our large avenues in old Bangkok just reminds me of Europe.

2) Where do you go to unwind and relax in Bangkok? What makes it special?

Brown Sugar (years ago voted as one of the best bars in the world by Newsweek) has just moved to my neighborhood in Old Bangkok. It’s a jazz joint with great authentic flair. The front faces Phrasumen Road, which has an old school NYC East Village vibe while the back is on a canal. I come from an Indie music back ground so I can’t tell you how lucky I am for the iconic bar’s move just up the road from my home. www.brownsugarbangkok.com

3) Where is the best coffee in Bangkok, and why?

My favorite local maker is Wawee Coffee. OK it’s a chain but it’s up there with any specialist. The beans are from the mountains of Chiang Rai in Northern Thailand, while every outlet’s got a clear-cut design vision and local charm. I frequent the one on Surawong Road adjacent to the popular Silom Road. www.waweecoffee.com

4) What’s your favourite museum or exhibit in Bangkok and what do you love about it?

For me, Thailand was at its architectural peak during King Rama V’s reign (1853 – 1910). He came back from Europe with western design elements (and with Italian architects!) and melded them into our local style. The ultimate of such structure is Vimanmek Mansion, where the King resided for a number of years. The palace itself is made from teak wood and the antiques within combine the best of the west and east.
5) What’s the best day trip to take from Bangkok, and why?

Ayutthaya, Thailand’s 17th Century Capital, is just an hour or so from Bangkok. That’s not too bad considering you could get stuck in the city’s traffic under the same time! Once there, unless you’ve got kids, forget about the elephant rides and head to the temple ruins. Wat Chaiwatthanaram is my favourite temple - the grounds are quaint and the temple has got a spiritual soul that just hits me, particularly at sunset. A number of seafood restaurants on the river also have great ambiance and terrific dishes. And if you actually want to spend the night, I’d recommend iuDia, a boutique property built with taste and simplicity.

www.iudia.com
LUXE LOVES

--- Dining ---

NAHM

As you’d expect of the guru of modern Thai cookery, David Thompson’s stylish etalier nestled poolside at The Metropolitan Hotel serves up some of the capital’s pinnacle dining. What you may not realize is that many of the recipes are old or historic, often using forgotten or neglected ingredients. The result is an extraordinary adventure into the cooking of the past melded with the comfort of fine service and surroundings. Try and snag one of the very few poolside tables.

The Metropolitan / 27 South Sathorn Rd / +66 2 625 3388 / lunch & dinner daily
www.metropolitan.bangkok.como.bz/

--- Dining ---

BO.LAN

This Thai-Oz couple, alumni of David Thompson, have taken an unprepossessing modern Thai villa with veranda, and turned it into a design-led and atmospheric destination diner serving heritage, Slow Food recipes served up with contemporary flair and a modicum of quirk. The service can stray from time to time, but the flavors more than make up for it.

Soi Pichai Ronnarong / Sukhumvit Soi 26 / +66 2 260 2962 / dinner Tue-Sun
www.bolan.co.th
--- Dining ---

**GAGGAN**

Chef Gaggan Anand's stint at El Bulli powers this fresh, molecular and ‘progressive’ Indian menu that you can enjoy a la carte or as a 10-course degustation. For us however, it’s his reinventions of traditional curries that blow us away each time. Using sous-vide and a bagful of alchemical miracles, it’s as if you are tasting ingredients for the very first time. The white on white villa tucked away on busy Langsuan is a calm and peaceful backdrop and the service super-efficient. Lovely.

68/1 Soi Langsuan (opposite Soi 3) / +66 2 652 1700 /
www.eatatgaggan.com

--- Dining ---

**HYDE AND SEEK**

Wonderfully relaxed and buzzy speakeasy loved as much for its excellent cocktail list and experienced bar staff as its European comfort food menu and fun, friendly atmosphere. Perch at the bar or reserve a streetside terrace table and just relax!

Athenee Residence / 65/1 Soi Ruamrudee / +66 2 168 3152 /
www.hydeandseek.com

--- Hotel ---

**THE SIAM**

Take one of Thailand’s foremost artistic families, add three acres of prime riverfront real estate and Bill Bensley as designer, then add an astonishing array of Thai and colonial antiques and collectibles, and you’ve got a recipe for success. The Siam is set to be the default stylista’s retreat with 28 suites and 11 pool villas, all with butler service, and each individually designed, featuring mod-retro deco fixtures and a host of charming eclectibles from the owner’s private collection. With lap pool, spa, riverboat service, bar, Chon Thai restaurant set in two beautiful old Thai teak houses, Deco Bar and Bistro, plus gym and yoga terrace, you’ll never want to leave.

3/2 Khao Rd / Vachirapayabal / Dusit /
+66 2 206 6999
thesiamhotel.com

--- Bar ---

**SKY BAR**

The ultra-spectacular views from this amazing rooftop glow-bar are strictly not for those who suffer from vertigo! While it’s standing room only and the crowd can be, dare we say, a little touristic, nonetheless it really is an experience, and gives you a staggering birds-eye view of the sheer magnitude of this great Asian metropolis.

63/F / State Tower Bangkok / 1055 Silom Rd / +66 2 624 9555
--- Shopping ---

**ALMETA SILK**

Flowing silks in hundreds of shimmering jewel colors hand-woven to order, with twelve plys and four yarns to choose from. Bring your precise measurements and take advantage of the bespoke curtain, wallpaper and cushion service, or choose from RTW bedding, wraps and accessories.

20/3 Sukhumvit Soi 23 / +66 2 238 4227 / 10am-6pm daily / no min order

www.almeta.com

--- Shopping ---

**TAILOR ON TEN**

This city has a lot of quite poor tailors, so what a joy it is then to discover Canadian suit supremos Alex and Ben Cole, who offer the finest of suiting and shirt fabrics, fitting, design, value and service. The charming, garden-fronted atelier sits at the very end of a quiet and leafy soi, and you can even order shirts online using their nifty design app.

93 Sukhumvit Soi 8 / Sukhumvit Rd / +66 084 877 1543

www.tailoronten.com

--- Shopping ---

**MATINA AMANITA**

Matina’s thoroughly original and unique, eye-catching costume and fine fairytale-like jewels in colorful animal, floral and whimsical forms will add a magic sparkle to any outfit.

Lobby Lvl / Gaysorn / 999 Ploenchit Rd / +66 2 656 1319

www.matinaamanita.com

--- Activities ---

**MUSEUM OF SIAM**

Become a Thai history buff at this brilliant primer to the Land of Smiles, taking you by the hand through the nation’s unique history, art, anthropology and nature that makes Thailand what it is today. The intuitive flow and interactive exhibits will keep fidgety tots and grumblestilskins well entertained.

Thanon Maharat / +66 2 225 2777 / 10am-6pm Tue-Sat

www.ndmi.or.th
LUXE LOVES

Activities

JIM THOMPSON HOUSE

Forever remembered as the man who resurrected the Thai silk industry, the Silk King's original teak house is an antique treat, set in a pretty khlong-side garden. Take the guided tour and then linger for retail opportunities and don't miss the tasty plates at the café. The Art Center is also worth a look for contempo exhibits.

6 Soi Kasemsan 2 / Rama 1 Rd / +66 2 216 7368 / 9am-5pm daily / Skytrain: National Stadium

www.jimthompsonhouse.com
LUXE LOATHEs

BANGKOK’S FILTHY AND CONGESTED KHLONGS, CANALS AND WATERWAYS

Such a shame, and such a waste

SNAKE AND CROCODILE FARMS

Easily avoidable tourist traps

FLOATING MARKETS

More easily avoidable tourist traps

TRAFFIC

At peak times you’ll need to allow at least 30 mins extra per journey if going by car
GETTING AROUND

Don't be caught standing in line at steaming Suvarnabhumi airport for a pot luck taxi. Instead, book a sparkling new Mercedes from Limousine Thailand to glide you into town and arrive fresh and cool as a cucumber. www.limousinethailand.com

AYUTTHAYA

Visiting the glorious ruins of Ayutthaya is a Bangkok must-do, but rather than packing in with a coach-load of tourists to get there, arrive by private rice barge after enjoying an overnight dinner cruise with Thai River Cruises. thairivercruises.com

PRIVATE CHARTER

Bangkok is a stunning city, so only appreciating it from the elevated vantage of the Skytrain is simply unacceptable. To get an appropriate and glamorous bird’s-eye view of the skyline, charter your very own private plane from Royal Skyways. www.royalskyways.co.th

SHOPPING CHAUFFEUR

There's nothing fab about endlessly hailing cabs on sweltering streets with armloads of shopping, so hiring your own chauffeured taxi for full or half day shopping trip is really a blissful no-brainer.

Call Sam on +66 81 685 6263

CUISINE

Eating delicious Thai cuisine is all the more enjoyable when you understand the history, ingredients and methods involved in its preparation, so book a personal market tour and cooking class at The Blue Elephant to get the most out of your mealtime. www.blueelephant.com
It’s the early bird that catches the worm, and if you want to avoid the tourist hordes then arrive by 8am at the Tha Oriental pier and catch the ferry to nearby Tha Chang pier where you’ll easily locate the stunning Grand Palace – grab an audio guide and enjoy it all peacefully (and coolly) while most are still abed. For more sightseeing you can take a cab one block to the next-door Wat Pho, home to the amazing and vast Reclining Buddha. If you’ve worked it correctly, the milling hordes will be arriving just as you’re leaving for your appointment at the Dusit Thani hotel’s Devarana Spa – the divine couple’s Deluxe Suites feature a shower with built-in steam room and fabulous circular flower bath. Suitably rejuvenated, into your cab you go and off to stalwart lunch favorite Kuppa, renowned for its great home-roasted coffee, but don’t miss our favorite spicy tuna salad. Retail? But, of course. What can be more romantic than feathering your nest? And you’re but minutes from deeply joyous Almeta silks on Soi 23 (see LUXE Loves). Their custom woven silk and accessories will galvanize even the grumpiest of hubbies. How about afternoon tea in a glorious private garden complete with gazebo, conservatory and white Persian cat? Hot foot it then to restful Agalico and don’t skimp on the delicious cakes. After a refresh stop back at your hotel be sure to ride the express elevator to the 63rd floor at the State Tower in Silom to the flabbergasting open air, glowing Sky Bar (see LUXE Loves), it’s standing room only and not for the nervous, but the views at sunset are spectacular. Down you come, and a very quick taxi ride will have you sitting poolside at the Metropolitan Hotel’s Nahm restaurant, where Thai cuisine guru David Thompson is serving up the city’s finest fine Thai dining. A nightcap at the Met Bar and it’s bedtime.
Start your day with a gentle browse of the city’s top contemporary Thai art at the Bangkok Art & Culture Centre, and for more great art don’t miss H Gallery and 100 Tonson. All that standing and staring can make for hungry tumis and what could be more stylish and healthful than the Metropolitan Hotel’s Glow? The light and energizing wellness menu of carefully sourced vegetables and proteins in a crisp white café space is rather conveniently located directly next to the COMO Shambhala Urban Escape spa, the perfect antidote to chic aches and pains. The pared-down rooms, excellently trained staff and signature pure oils and products are really worth the extra cost. A stylish day wouldn’t be stylish without some kind of shopportunity and down by the river at O.P. Place close to the Mandarin Oriental you’ll find the super-deluxe Ashwood Gallery - the absolute last word on fine Asian art and furniture. This hugely spacious, charcoal-walled showroom holds a wish list of Oriental beauty. In the same soi are Thai Home Industries that do a great line in brass bowls and pearl cutlery and Lin Silvercraft who do some smashing simple picture frames and can make almost anything to order. As sunset arrives and thoughts turn to cocktails, stake your claim on the pool terrace at Long Table, before making your way to close-by Bo.Lan (see LUXE Loves) whose Slow Food contemporary takes on Thai cuisine keep the city’s foodies coming back for more - you can elect to sit indoors for aircon or alfresco on the veranda, but either way you’re in for a treat. The evening doesn’t stop here, of course, there are nightcaps to be thought of at Hyde and Seek (see LUXE Loves), the achingly hip bunker pumping with a cocktail of flitterati, expats, creative types and next generation high-society. And for the truly game, it’s on to Bedsupperclub, the bed-laden Barbarella spaceship where you can prance with the best of them, only do remember to take ID with you no matter how long in the tooth you may be. Party on!
First of all, it can be crucial in a city like Bangkok to choose the right hotel, the city’s mind-boggling traffic at peak times can mean the difference between sealing the deal and a total no-show – oh, no! Oh, yes. Step forward then that well located haven of urbanity, the Hansar Hotel, nestling just behind the Four Seasons on Rajadamri Road, you have the convenience and contentment of knowing there is a Skytrain station literally seconds away from your door, whilst inside, the Executive Floor is all things to all biz bees, with free WiFi, complimentary cocktails, use of boardroom and a whole slew more. With your hotel sorted, you’re going to need to look the part. If you have a few days in the city, it’s absolutely worth heading to the best tailor in town Tailor On Ten (see LUXE Loves). Elsewhere you’ll find shoddy fabrics, one fitting and fused linings, here you find three fittings, Holland & Sherry fabrics and floating linings galore. These guys are not 24-hour tailors and neither would you want them to be. If you have a lot of pick ups or stop offs, it’s really worth hiring your own car and driver rather than risking endless cabs with no idea where they’re going, so check out Limousine Thailand (see Drab vs Fab), but whatever you do, always allow an extra 30 mins per journey no matter what time of day. When meeting and eating, the best breakfast in town is the Sukhothai Hotel, their sour dough bread is legendary, and lunch on the café terrace of their pool helps the day go faster. In the evening, client drinks at wine bar Opus is a great way to start, where Alex the owner is incredibly knowledgeable, and then on to the chef’s table at Gaggan (see LUXE Loves) for excellent cocktails and the signature 10-course molecular Indian extravaganza. Impressive, and tasty, in equal measure. Success!
THE ESSENTIALS

ROMANCE

Grand Palace / Thanon Na Phra Lan / Phra Borom Maha Ratchawang / Phra Nakhon

Wat Pho / 2 Thanon Sanam Chai / Phra Nakhon / +66 2 225 9395 / www.watpho.com

Devarana Spa / 946 Rama IV Rd, Silom, Bangrak / +66 2 636 3596 / www.devaranaspa.com

Kuppa / 39 Soi Sukhumvit / Sukhumvit Rd / Klongtoey / +66 2 259 1954 / www.kuppa.co.th

Almeta (see LUXE Loves)

Agalico / 20 Sukhumvit Lane 51 / +66 2 662 5857 ext 111 / www.agalico.co.th

State Tower / 1055 Silom Rd

Sky Bar (see LUXE Loves)

Nahm / 27 South Sathorn Rd / Tungmahamek / Sathorn / +66 2 625 3388 / www.metropolitan.bangkok.como.bz

Met Bar / 27 South Sathorn Rd / Tungmahamek / Sathorn / +66 2 625 3333 / www.metropolitan.bangkok.como.bz

STYLE

Bangkok Art & Culture Centre / 939 Thonglor 1, opposite MBK / Siam & Around / +66 2 214 6630-8 www.bacc.or.th

H Gallery / 201 Sathorn Soi 12 / +66 85 021 5508 www.hgallerybkk.com

100 Tonson / 100 Soi Tonson / Ploenchit Rd / Lumpini / Pathumwan / +66 2 684 1527 www.100tonsongallery.com

Glow / 27 South Sathorn Rd / Tungmahamek / Sathorn / +66 2 625 3366 www.metropolitan.bangkok.como.bz

COMO Shambhala Urban Escape / 27 South Sathorn Rd / Tungmahamek / Sathorn / Email: metropolitan.lon@comoshambhala.bz www.metropolitan.bangkok.como.bz

O.P. Place / 30/1 Soi 38 / Charoen Krung Rd / Bang Rak / +66 2 266 0186

Ashwood Gallery / 1/F, 3/F / O.P. Place / 30/1 Soi 38 / Charoen Krung Rd / Bang Rak / +66 2 266 0187

Thai Home Industries / 35 Oriental Soi 40 / Charoen Krung Rd / +66 2 234 1736

Lin Silvercraft / Soi 38 / 3 Chareon Krung Rd / Bangrak / +66 2 234 2391 www.linjewelers.com

Long Table / 25/F / 48 Column Building / Sukhumvit Soi 16 / +66 2 302 2557-9 www.longtablebangkok.com

Bo.Lan (see LUXE Loves)

Hyde and Seek (see LUXE Loves)

Bedsupperclub / 11 Sukhumvit / Sukhumvit Rd / Klongtoey-nua / Wattana / +66 (0)2 651 3337 www.bedsupperclub.com/bangkok
THE ESSENTIALS

BUSINESS

Hansar Hotel / 3 Soi Mahadlekhuang 2 / Rajdamri Rd / +66 2 209 1234
www.hansarbangkok.com

Tailor On Ten (see LUXE Loves)

Limousine Thailand (see Drab vs Fab)

Sukhothai Hotel / 13/3 South Sathorn Rd / +66 2 344 8888
www.sukhothai.com

Opus / 64 Pan Rd / Silom / +66 2 637 9899
www.wbopus.com

Gaggan (see LUXE Loves)
YOUR LUXE NOTES