



## 9 of the Best Things to Do in Bangkok

### Chao Phraya River Ferry Boat

One of the best ways to experience the city is with the hop-on hop-off [Blue Flag Chao Phraya Tourist Boat](#).

These public ferry boats run every 30 minutes and are one of the most scenic, convenient, and inexpensive ways to explore Bangkok's riverside gems.

A day pass costs less than \$5 and gives visitors easy access to some of the top sites in Bangkok without dealing with the notorious Bangkok traffic.

If you want to see the main sites, I recommend starting at Sathorn Pier and hopping off at Ratchawongse Pier to explore Chinatown.

Next, hop off at the Wat Arun Pier to visit one of Bangkok's most iconic temples. Your next stop will be at the Tha Chang Pier, where you can visit the impressive Grand Palace.

The last stop is at Phra Arthit Pier, where you can walk to the famous Khaosan Road market.

Click the link for a full list of [attractions at each pier](#).

### The Grand Palace

The Grand Palace is one of Bangkok's most iconic landmarks, and can be easily reached by the Chao Phraya River ferry.

The palace was built in 1782 and served as the official residence of the Thai royal family. Today, it is only used for ceremonial purposes.

In addition to the Grand Palace, the dazzling palace complex also includes Wat Phra Kaew, or the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. The intricate details of the temple are mind-blowing, however, the Emerald Buddha is surprisingly small.

Security is quite strict at the palace, and clothing restrictions are enforced. Shoulders and legs must be covered. No tank tops, shorts, or short skirts are allowed.

If you aren't prepared, you can purchase clothing outside the complex. My husband and son bought traditional elephant pants for about \$3 since they were wearing shorts. They were comfortable and actually made for an inexpensive souvenir to bring home!

Wat Pho is also a short walk away. This is the home of the famous Reclining Buddha. The massive 150-foot-long statue is coated entirely in gold.

Free guided tours are offered throughout the day, and a self-guided audio tour is also available. Click the link for updated hours, pricing, and visitor information for [The Grand Palace](#).

## Wat Arun

Wat Arun, also known as the Temple of Dawn, is one of the most recognized and photographed landmarks in Bangkok.

The original temple was renovated in the late 18th century, and the towering central spire (prang) that stands out against the city skyline was constructed in the 19th century.

The temple's prang towers an impressive 230 feet high, but my favorite feature is that it is decorated with thousands of pieces of Chinese porcelain, seashells, and colorful ceramic tiles. These were used as ballast in ships arriving from China and later repurposed for the temple's intricate mosaics.

The interior of the temple is closed, but visitors can climb partway up the spire for panoramic views of the river and city.

Although it's called the Temple of Dawn, the best time to view Wat Arun is actually at sunset, especially from across the river.

The golden hues reflecting off its mosaic-covered spire make it a spectacular sight as the sky glows red and orange behind it. For one of the best views of the temple at sunset, make reservations at the Sala Rattanakosin rooftop restaurant and bar across the river.

Click the link for updated visitor information and ticket prices to [Wat Arun](#).

## Chinatown

Bangkok's Chinatown is one of the oldest and most vibrant neighborhoods in the city. In fact, it is considered one of the oldest Chinatowns in the world!

It was established in 1782, when King Rama I moved the capital to what is now modern-day Bangkok. The Chinese immigrants who had been living near the Grand Palace were relocated to an area along the Chao Phraya River, which later became Yaowarat Road.

Today, Yaowarat Road is still the beating heart of Chinatown. This thriving commercial and cultural hub is rich in history, buzzing with energy, and packed with amazing restaurants and shops.

The best time to visit Chinatown is after the sun goes down. The vibrant night market is famous for its neon lights, busy sidewalks, and endless street food vendors.

Bangkok's Chinatown is known as one of the top street food destinations in the world. At the night market, you'll find vendors grilling skewers, steaming dumplings, and serving up mango sticky rice, oyster omelets, and exotic desserts. It's loud, chaotic, and absolutely amazing! Just make sure to bring cash since credit cards are not accepted at most vendors.

Sampeng Lane Market is also a fun place to shop. This narrow alleyway is a labyrinth packed with stalls selling everything from fabrics and hair accessories to toys and kitchenware.

While you're in Chinatown, stop by Wat Mangkon Kamalawat, the Dragon Lotus Temple. This temple was built in the late 1800s and is considered the largest and most important Chinese Buddhist temple in Bangkok.

A few other highlights include the Chinatown Gate (Odeon Circle) and Talat Noi. This photogenic neighborhood near Chinatown is known for its street art, antique shops, and old shophouses.

For a fun experience, try booking a [Chinatown food tour](#) or a nighttime [tuk-tuk tour of Chinatown](#).

## Lunch at Thipsamai or Wattana Panich

Thipsamai has a reputation for serving the best pad Thai in Bangkok. This small restaurant is located near the Grand Palace and has been serving up legendary noodles for decades.

Their signature Pad Thai is smoky, rich, and made with fresh prawns and house-made tamarind sauce. It is cooked over charcoal flames and wrapped in a delicate egg crepe. It is a unique dish and mouthwateringly delicious! You can expect a long line, but it moves fast and is well worth the wait.

Alternatively, if you're seeking a true foodie adventure, make your way to Wattana Panich. This restaurant is famous for its 45-year-old beef soup that simmers in the same giant cauldron day after day. It's rich, deep, and unlike anything you've ever tasted.

## MBK Center

One thing we noticed about Bangkok is that there is a strong mall culture going on! It seems that Americans are spending less time in malls and more time shopping online. Being in

Thailand brought me back to my high school days, where hanging out at the mall was the cool place to be!

There are plenty of giant shopping malls in Bangkok, but the MBK Center is one of the largest and most famous ones. It has over 2,000 shops packed into eight floors, with everything from affordable souvenirs and quirky Thai fashion to electronics and traditional crafts.

You'll also find plenty of name-brand knock-offs. We had to laugh at the fake Nike shoes that were stamped with the North Face logo and also had a Supreme tag haha.

We were also impressed with the restaurants at the malls. Our favorite is Baan Ying on the 5th floor of the Terminal21 shopping mall. They also have locations at Central World and One Bangkok. Their mango sticky rice is the mango sticky rice of my dreams! I also ate the best pad see ew of our trip at this restaurant.

## Longtail Boat Canal Cruise

Get a taste of local life in Bangkok on a [Longtail Boat Canal Cruise](#).

The Chao Phraya River is the main river that winds its way through the city. However, there is an extensive network of smaller canals and waterways that can be explored on a traditional longtail boat.

On the 2-hour tour, you'll pass by famous landmarks such as Wat Arun and Wat Paknam Phasi Charoen. Wat Paknam Phasi Charoen is also known as the "Big Buddha Temple." It is home to the massive golden Buddha, which towers 226 feet above the riverside neighborhood.

You'll then glide through Bangkok's "Venice of the East," passing by colorful stilted houses, sleepy canals, small temples, and local floating markets.

The boat stops at Khlong Bang Luang, where you can visit the Artist's House. This 200-year-old home has been converted into a market and performance space.

## Dinner at Nobu Bangkok

For one of the best dinner views in the city, make reservations at Nobu Bangkok. This rooftop restaurant is 58 stories above the twinkling lights of the city. The sky-high views are unreal!

Dinner reservations begin at 6 pm, and you can stay at the table for a maximum of 2 hours. I recommend booking the earliest seating so that you can experience the city at golden hour, sunset, and when it's all lit up at night.

We made reservations for the sleek 58th Floor Terrace overlooking the city skyline. Tables can also be reserved for the 60th Floor Rooftop Bar for drinks and light bites.

If it is raining, the indoor dining room offers floor-to-ceiling windows with spectacular views.

The restaurant specializes in Japanese dishes. Indulge in their signature dishes like Black Cod Miso, Yellowtail Jalapeño, and nigiri & sashimi rolls. The food is delicious, but it is pricey, and the portions are small. It's worth the cost for the views alone, but you may need to stop for street food on the way home if you're still hungry!

Another option is the iconic Sky Bar at Lebua. This rooftop bar was made famous in *The Hangover II* movie. They specialize in drinks and only offer small bites, so Nobu is the best option if you're looking to eat dinner. Keep in mind that a smart casual dress code is required at both restaurants.

## Khaosan Road

Khaosan Road is probably the most infamous street in Bangkok. It is known for its wild energy, backpacker bars, music, and vibrant street food scene.

During the day, it is pretty mellow with local vendors selling knick-knacks and street food. This is the time to come if you are traveling with kids, or are too old for the party scene (like us!).

If you're seeking the nightlife, come after dark for packed bars, neon lights, wild scenes, live music, and sizzling street food stalls. It's chaotic, loud, and highly entertaining if that's your thing! Love it or hate it, it's an experience you won't forget.

## A Few More of the Best Things to Do in Bangkok:

- **Night Markets:** In addition to Chinatown and Khaosan Road, a few more popular night markets include Jodd Fairs (formerly Ratchada Train Night Market), Asiatique the Riverfront, and Chatuchak Friday Night Market.
- **Ancient City (Muang Boran):** Explore miniature replicas of Thailand's most famous landmarks in one massive, outdoor cultural park.
- **Maeklong Railway & Damnoen Saduak Floating Market:** Take a day trip to experience a train running through a market, and a floating market where vendors sell fruits from their boats on winding canals.
- **King Power Mahanakhon Tower:** For some of the best panoramic views in the city, head to the King Power Mahanakhon Tower. Experience the Mahanakhon Skywalk, the highest observation deck in Thailand, and step onto the glass floor thousands of feet above the city.
- **Instagrammable Cafés:** At After the Rain Café, you can row a boat through jungle canals to a hidden garden café. Bubble in the Forest is a dreamy spot with tables set over a turquoise lagoon. Baan Suan Sathron Cafe feels a

world away from city life, with beautiful gardens, waterfalls, a koi pond, and a whimsical forest with parrots and flowering shrubs.

I hope this guide will help as you plan your trip to Bangkok. Enjoy your time in the city!