

# THAILAND

*From bustling Bangkok to the beautiful beach resort of Pattaya to the island charms of Phuket, Thailand has become one of the gay world's top travel destinations. With scenic beauty, a pleasant sensuality, and famously friendly people, it's easy to understand why.*

Michael Darton

Thailand offers an exciting fusion of Oriental wonders, modern technology, and luxurious comforts. This amazing country boasts world-class hotels, state-of-the-art shopping centers, and pulsating nightlife. Whatever your budget, you'll be spoilt with the variety and shocked by the value.

As well as the fun, frolic, and hedonism, there's the pleasure of getting to know Thais. This is a society tightly woven by Buddhism and a love of their monarchy. Taxi drivers stop at small temples to make offerings and pray, while at 6:00 p.m. every day people all over Thailand stand still to pay respects to the king. They do the same at movie theaters before each screening.

With attractive beaches, jungle retreats, an open sex scene, opulent religious temples, and so much more, visitors have a wide choice of diversions. You can visit anytime, but the best time for tourism is during the cool season between November and April. To get a comprehensive overview of tourism offerings, weather, and regional highlights, visit [Tourismthailand.se](http://Tourismthailand.se).

## BANGKOK

There is a well established and thriving gay scene in Bangkok with streets full of go-go bars with wondrously explicit shows. You can be sure to meet a mix of men both local and international.

### Getting there

Staff at the gay-owned **A and F Tour Travel** (120 Silom Road; +66-0-2266-5105-6; [Aandftour.com](http://Aandftour.com)) are super knowledgeable. Director Franz has a wealth of experience on travel in and around Thailand as well as neighboring Laos and Cambodia. Or they can fine-tune a package trip to your desires; why not try a three day side-trip to Phuket, Chang Mai, or Hong Kong? Their website shows the range of flights, accommodations, and travel and tour services.

Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi International airport recently opened, making arriving in Thailand easier. I flew in with **British Airways** ([Ba.com](http://Ba.com)), which offers a range of seating options. For a bit extra I booked premium economy with extra leg room (well appreciated on a long flight), individual TV sets, and better food with more attentive service.

As you wander out of Bangkok air-

port you will be amazed at how many people approach you to offer you a taxi, limousine, hotel, or maybe even a massage. I advise making a beeline to the stand emblazoned "Taxi Meter Hire" to avoid scams or overcharging. Soon Bangkok's efficient Skytrain, which operates all over the city, will extend out to the airport.

### Accommodations

**Tarntawan Place Hotel** (119/5-10 Surawong Road; +66-0-2238-2620; [Tarntawan.com](http://Tarntawan.com)) is first-class and conveniently located between Silom Road (the main gay district) and Surawong Road. The style, decor, and service here are superb, and everything from simple rooms to deluxe suites are at competitive prices. All have cable TV, telephone, coffee and tea facilities, as well as 24-hour room service. They offer laundry service and daily newspapers and are affiliated with a nearby fitness center. It's good to book ahead.

**BBB Inn** (918 Rama 4 Road; +66-0-22-36-22-59; [Bbbinn.thaiboy.net](http://Bbbinn.thaiboy.net)) is a gay hotel offering decent rooms with hot showers, TV, and air conditioning for a great price. The location is right around the corner from "Boys Plaza,"

which glitters at night with neon-lit clubs and go-go bars. Management has an easygoing attitude, and the young men working here are friendly and polite – always happy to chat or play pool in the reception area. They run a 24-hour bar service, and have no problem at all with overnight visitors and friends staying in your room; in fact, they encourage it!

**Unico Grande Hotel** (533 Silom Road; +66-0-2378-3004; Unicoproperty.co.th) is just off Silom Road, which makes it ideally located for shopping and nighttime fun. This is an all-new hotel with a pool and fitness area, restaurant, and efficient room service.

**Pan Pacific Hotel** (952 Rama IV Road; +66-0-2632-9000; Panpacific.com/Bangkok) sits at the beginning of Silom Road and offers tranquil respite once inside. This world-class hotel is a heavenly escape from Bangkok's hustle and bustle. Rooms have panoramic views of the city. The toilets are even fitted with state-of-the-art seat-warming and personal washing features – quite a surprise if you don't expect this level of pampering!

## Clubs, pubs, and go-go bars

**Telephone Pub, Restaurant & Lounge** (114/11-13 Silom Road, Soi 4; Telephonepub.com) has long been one of most popular venues, and is run by the hard-working, knowledgeable, and charismatic Lee Harris. The mixed crowd of ages, nationalities, and types here has always impressed me; everyone fits in, and that goes for lone travelers or those arriving in large groups. Telephone Pub's menu is as lavish as ever and with a wide, wide selection: over 250 dishes to please every palate – from traditional Thai favorites such as Tom Kha Kai (spicy coconut chicken soup) to dishes with a more northern Thai flavor. They have regular events here, and the telephones are all back in working order, so you can call up that table you've been eyeing all night and have some fun. Their website is full of maps, information, tips, and even contains a list of Bangkok hotspots, in both

Thai and English – handy for printing out and showing your taxi driver.

A mixed crowd packs **Dick's Cafe Bangkok** (Soi Duangthawee Suriwong Road) nightly. At this bar and restaurant enjoy attentive service and a tantalizing menu. The seats outside face the bustling street, full of passers-by and interesting action.

**Balls Sports Bar** (Soi Duangthawee, off Suriwong Road) is a new addition to the gay scene. Big screens and live sports action play all around the bar, making it easy to chat up fellow sports fans.

**G.O.D** (Guys On Display) **Nightclub** (Silom Soi 2/1, down the small street next to Noodi Restaurant) has taken over the old space formerly belonging to Freeman's Nightclub. This place certainly lives up to its name, with shirtless men strutting their stuff to hard house and funky sounds. The nightclub has gained its reputation for being a late-night venue and starts to get crowded around 2 a.m.

After a major refurbishment and makeover **DJ Station** (Silom Soi 2) has more room to offer but still seems to get packed on weekends. Their legendary shows are going strong with comedy, drag, and lip-synching acts all highlighted with camp outfits and over-the-top amounts of glamour.

**Dreamboy** (38/3-6 Soi Pratoochai, Suriwong Road) is one of the most impressive go-go bars to visit; you can sit and watch the shows with a spread of hot guys. The climax of the show gets as raunchy and sexy as you can imagine. Expect a full-on explicit performance; this show is no place for the faint-hearted!

**Tawan Men's Club** (2/2 Soi Tantawan, Surawong Road) is a long-running and well-established go-go bar with muscle men shows. You can sit at ease and enjoy the visually pleasing happenings, or you can arrange for one of the pumped-up hunks to give you a massage – out or in.

## Shopping and services

**Prince Raja: International Tailor** (2/6 Soi Sribumphen; +66-2-286-0897; Princeraja.com) is a first-class tailoring

business that has been making suits and clothes for the gay community for 17 years. They deliver made-to-measure suits, shirts, and trousers, as well as other garments. You can choose your fabric and let Prince Raja give you that look and fit you've always wanted, all at excellent prices, with quick turnaround and worldwide delivery options.

The Silom road has a market nightly except Mondays. Stalls sell fashionable clothing, shoes, t-shirt, DVDs, and souvenirs; quality may vary, but the prices are certainly pleasing.

One of my favorite places to shop is Suan Lum night bazaar which is open daily from around 5 p.m. Situated in an area called Lumpini, it's easily accessible by taxi. Small boutique stalls and shops sell a range of clothes, souvenirs, and art – all at unbelievable prices.

For a state-of-the-art shopping experience, visit Siam Paragon, easily reached by taking the sky train to Siam Station. This recently-opened shopping and entertainment complex boasts a jungle rain forest, water fountains, and aquarium – and of course, it's packed with endless floors of designer shops and departments stores.

## Beauty, saunas, and massage

**Chang Foot Massage and Spa** (Silom, Saladaeng BTS Station; Chang-footmassagespa.com) is part of a chain of spas all over Bangkok offering a selection of treatments, including foot reflexology, traditional Thai massage, and aromatherapy massage. One hour of the latter is about \$20 U.S. I tried one myself – it's a great authentic massage. You may be offered to end the session in a more sensual way. I always find in Thailand it's best to be clear what you do and don't want before you begin. It's always your choice, but tipping is expected if you do ask for an extension.

**Cutey Beauty** (Third Floor, Thaniya Plaza, Silom Road; Cuteyandbeauty.com) offers everything from hair-coloring and cuts as well as massage, facials, and body waxing; it's well-run with good prices too. Well worth a



**Soi Duangthawee - Bangkok.**  
**All the sporting action on the big screen, meet friends and enjoy the best sports bar in Bangkok.**

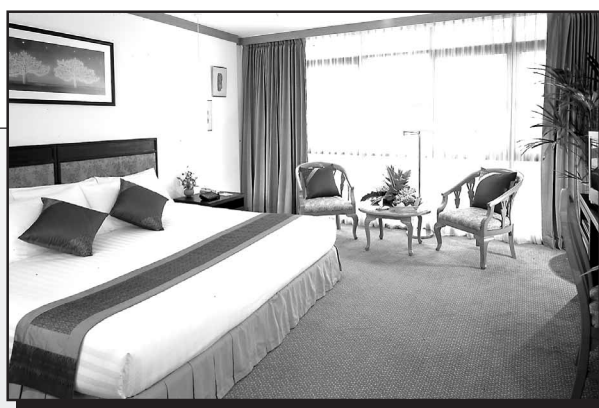


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**At Studio BB,  
in the Paradise Complex, Patong**



**Boat Bar boys – Patong, Phuket**



**Mr. Pat of  
Dream-  
boy,  
Bangkok**



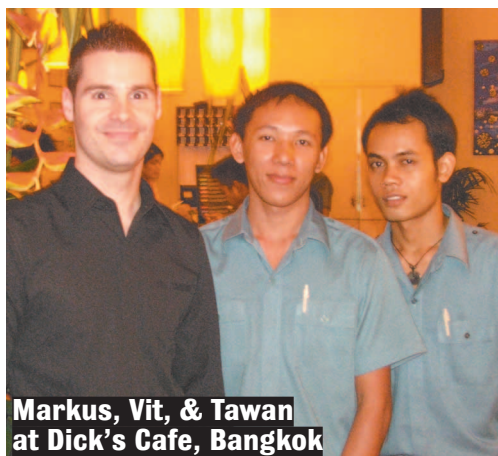
**On holiday  
at Thailand's Patong  
Beach, Phuket**



**Charming  
Nun of  
Kiss –  
Patong,  
Phuket**



**A, Keng, & Tom –  
friendly staff of BBB Inn, Bangkok**



**Markus, Vit, & Tawan  
at Dick's Cafe, Bangkok**



**Connect Guesthouse's weekly boat  
tour to Koh Kai island, Phuket**

visit to spoil yourself when out shopping on Silom Road.

**Global Medical Clinic** (281/15 Soi Silom Road; +66-02-635-5414; Globalmedicalclinic.com) offers gay-friendly laser surgery, with a full range of treatments including Bio-Alcamid for lipoatrophy.

**Babylon Sauna and Spa** (34 Soi Nadhna, South Sathorn Road, Soi 1) is the most lavish and stylish sauna I've ever seen. They offer a range of amenities, including a pool, gym, restaurant, sauna, steam, and private rooms. The ambiance and entertainment are exquisite, too. Daytimes you can hear classical music, and on selected evenings live jazz singers set a tone of style and glamour.

## PATTAYA

The beautiful beach resort of Pattaya is just two-hour drive from Bangkok. Buses are a cheap and convenient way to get to Pattaya, and they leave from Bangkok's Ekkamai Station, accessible by the Sky Train or taxi. The bus costs just a few dollars. But if you prefer to have an express and private ride, take a private car or taxi, about \$40 U.S., one way.

Endless shopping centers, markets, food stalls, and massage shops operate along the main street, which is opposite the long stretch of beach. And a whole gay zone is thriving, filled to the brim with go-go bars and go-go boys, international restaurants, cabaret bars with piano players and sultry singers, massage shops, a gym and sauna, as well as hotels and guesthouses.

## Accommodations

**Ambiance Hotel** (325/89 Pattayaland Soi 3; +66-0-38-424-099, or 0-38-425-145; Ambiancehotel.com) is run by the well-respected and hardworking Jim Lumsden. The hotel is premium-class, with rooms and suites to suit all. Their suites offer balconies overlooking the street. There's a bar and restaurant as well as nicely-equipped gym with an adjoining sauna, **Boyz Sauna Gym** (325/93 Pattayaland Soi 3; Boyz-gym.com).

**Le Cafe Royale** (325/102-109 Pattayaland Soi 3; +66-0-38-423-515; Caferoyale-pattaya.com) is a well-run hotel in the heart of the action, featuring a restaurant and piano bar. The rooms are all clean and well-appointed, and range in price from basic to luxurious.

## Nightlife and dining

You'll feel instantly at home at **Dick's Cafe Jomtien** (413/129 Jomtien Complex, Tappraya Road; Dickscafe.com). The staff is relaxed, and you can waste hours here chatting to locals and international travelers. You're sure to see some eye-candy, too.

**Boyz Boyz Boyz** (325/89 Pattayaland Soi 3) offers a cabaret that will tease, tempt, and tantalize you. Get your seat early, as each night before midnight the crowds gather for a show that has a hot range of men. Feel comfortable to sit and watch without hassle, or you can elect to enjoy some "close-up" action.

**New Orleans Restaurant** (Soi Pattayaland 2) lives up to its name, and offers Creole and Cajun cuisine, along

with tasty steak and ribs. Their baby-back ribs with a lashing of Cajun sauce are mouth-watering. There are Thai options, too, and the ambiance and service are first-rate.

## Property and real estate

If you fall in love with (or in!) Pattaya and want to stay, you can find your dream property with the help of **McInnes Corporation** (194/18-21 Pattaya Klang Road; +66-0-38-421-508; Mcinnes-corporation.com). Jerry Jeritza can share his knowledge and help you find a beach-front condo for a good price. Buying property in another culture is complicated, but McInnes can guide you through all the arrangements.

## PHUKET

Phuket is Thailand's largest island, connected to the mainland by a bridge. It's set on the western side of Thailand and surrounded by the beautiful Andaman Sea. Phuket's capital, Patong, is a busy resort town with no lack of girly bars. Visitors enjoy scuba-diving, paragliding, or just sun-worshipping on the beach. Patong's busy gay beach and gay zone – known as the Paradise Complex – offers bars, clubs, and a sauna.

Look beyond the obvious tourist traps and Patong has some secret hideaways, such as Kalim Beach, where you can sit with the locals and eat fresh seafood and barbecued meat.

Just down from Kalim Beach is the Muslim area, which is fascinating to explore. There are numerous guesthouses and hotels along the Phra



Medical tourism to Thailand - affordable and safe

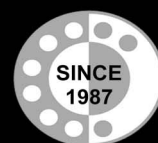
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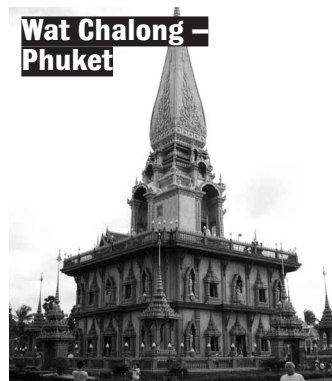
## THAILAND



At Dreamboy, Bangkok



Pattaya guys: Pong, Ooo, & Derek



Wat Chalong – Phuket



Mr. Telephone contest winner Khun Tai and club owner Lee



Prince Raja International Tailor (Bangkok) awaits your measurements

You don't have to sleep where you play...

# CC Bloom's Hotel

Phuket - Thailand



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15 % discount off our normal nightly rate

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Barami Road. Take a taxi and check out some of the bargains. You can expect a room with hot shower, balcony, and TV for as little as \$10 U.S.

Nearby resorts, such as Kata and Karon, are less touristy and quieter and are easy to travel to by taxi or local buses.

Numerous boats leave from Patong going to local islands and desolate beaches—tour operators and travel shops aren't shy with their offers to help. Just along the beach is the travel shop **Laem-phet Travel Service** (53 Pradaramee Road, near Patong Beach) where you can eat and watch the waves while getting advice. Or there's **Scorpio Tours** (9/5 Prachanukhao Road), where friendly owner Jintana speaks perfect English.

## Accommodations

**CC Bloom's Hotel** (84/21 Patak Road Soi 10, Karon, Phuket; +66-0-76-333-222; Ccbloomshotel.com) is a sophisticated resort on a quiet hillside about a mile from Karon Beach. There's an elegant, decadent ambiance here that marries East and West. Owner Skip hails from Hawaii and dreamed of a welcoming resort of international standards suffused with tranquil Thai overtones. The name? It comes from Bette Midler's character in the film *Beaches*. While sitting in the hotel's Sunset Bar overlooking the pool, with its free-floating blue balloons, you can just imagine Bette walking right in. Rooms have all modern amenities and well-equipped kitchens. The hotel provides private cars to take you to local places of interest. They hold regular pool parties here with a free buffet and games, as well as a fantastic cabaret. Book soon for reduced rates, February to August 2008.

**Connect Hotel** (125/8-9 Rat-U-Thit Road, Patong Beach; +66-76-294-195; Beachpatong.com) is more than a hotel: it's a restaurant, bar, internet cafe, and all-around hub and hangout for gay life in Patong. Standard rooms include TV, hot shower, free wi-fi, and tea and coffee; deluxe suites come with balcony. If you do want to be away from the action, request a room around the back of the building. Saturdays bring

Connect Hotel's weekly gay boat trip. Sail off to a beautiful Koo Kai Island (translation: "Egg Island," a reference to the shape!) and play volleyball with men in speedos, or just recline and enjoy the food and hospitality. The "gay for a day" island is exclusively for the gay-trippers. Included in the price is a buffet that includes a range of drinks and fruit. They provide snorkeling equipment too: the fish are amazingly colorful and tame.

**Aquarius Guesthouse and Sauna** (127/10-17 Rat-U-Thit Road, Paradise Complex, Patong; +66-0-76-341-668; Aquarius-guesthouse.com) is centrally located and a short walk to the beach. Surrounded by bars and local lads, the action is only steps away. There's a range of rooms—some overlooking Paradise Complex, and others situated in a place less bustling. Enjoy a rooftop jacuzzi and a sauna open every day. Once a week here they have certified diving testing, offered by a gay instructor. A landlubber? You can get your feet wet by trying out deep-sea diving in their small pool.

## Dining

**Sphinx Theater and Restaurant** (120 Rat-U-Thit Road, Patong) is a short walk from the Paradise Center. They serve a huge selection of aromatic Thai dishes and do a Thai take on tapas, with such treats such as grilled succulent prawns on lemongrass skewers. But it's not just food here! The shows mingle traditional Thai theater with Western comedy. The result is effervescent lip-synching and cabaret. The sets are the most professional I've seen in Thailand. Explore the cocktail list while enjoying the hour's spectacle. I got to see Destiny's Child's "Survivor" with a gorgeous lady singing lead and four soldiermen controlling her with a heavy rope from the corners of the stage!

The seaside **Da Maurizio Restaurant and Bar** (223/3 Prabarami Road, Patong) serves contemporary Italian fare in a setting so perfect it feels like a film set. There are pastas and an extensive fish menu, with a highlight being

oven-baked Phuket lobster. During high-season book ahead.

## Nightlife

The whole of the Patong really becomes one big nightclub after dark, with streams of bars and lively punters dancing in the street and on tabletops. The Paradise Complex defines the gay zone, and it is packed with clubs, bars, go-go joints, and cabaret venues. The streets are lined with available men and women, and "Ladyboys" in between. Many will be those who try to persuade you to come in to their bar or show.

**My Way** (125/15-17 Rat-U-Thit Road) is a top go-go bar in the Paradise Complex, with nightly cabaret and a bevy of available guys.

For a more relaxed pace, try the long-running **Flying Handbag** (Soi 5, Paradise Complex), with a host of international drinks and local beers.

Dance the night away at **Boat Bar** (Soi 5, Paradise Complex), which is still packing the late crowds in. Owner Daeng can't stop improving the his club, which now boasts a state-of-art sound and laser system.

The new kid on the block is **Kiss** (Soi 5, Paradise Complex), which in a short time has become a favorite places to hang, dance, and cruise. They have cabaret and entertainment shows nightly, complemented by cute and friendly guys.

## Health and beauty

**Relax U** (Phuket Orchid Resort, Karon; +66-0-81-569-0800; Relaxu.nu) offers a service maybe you didn't think of coming to Phuket to find. Medical tourism to Thailand is booming, thanks to the country's world-class doctors and low cost. Relax U's specialty is cosmetic medicine, and they are affiliated with the prestigious Bangkok Hospital. They offer a range of treatments from skin rejuvenation to liposuction, all at amazing prices. Their popular eye-lid lift operation, for instance, often costs less than \$300. Check the website for full details and to connect with Ulf, their customer liaison (who wears another hat as owner of Patong's Connect Guesthouse). ▼