**Thailand (A Page in the Submenu under Destinations)**

**Add an image gallery of 8 photos of Thailand here using Meta Slider. Some image files will be placed on Blackboard in Week 5. However you can choose your own eg from pixabay.com.**

**Insert a space (a blank line) via &nbsp; (in Text mode) if required.**

Thailand was known as **Siam** until 1949, but has always been an independent country. The **population** of is now over 60 million, most of whom are Buddhist. There is a significant population of Muslims in the south of the country however. Thailand is still a monarchy, and the King in particular is regarded with great reverence. Thai politics however can be very tumultuous, with a military regime currently in power. Please respect the pillars of Thai society. You will then truly find yourself in "The Land of the Smiles".

Thailand has three main seasons. The rainy season is from about May to October. It will normally only rains for a few hours in the afternoon or at night. The so-called '**cool' season** from November to February is probably the best time to visit, though it can still be quite hot and is a lot busier with tourists. The **hot season** from March to May is best described as very hot. In the hill country in the north it can become quite cool at night, while in the south temperatures do not vary as much.

Most Australians fly into either Bangkok or Phuket. Some very cheap fares can be found at certain times. There are however a few other international airports. Access by land from bordering countries such as Cambodia and Malaysia is not too difficult, but travel to and from Burma is very difficult. For Australians a 30-day visa is available on arrival, a very simple option for most. Many foreigners actually live in Thailand.

Accommodation in Thailand can be cheap, but there are upmarket choices in the main tourists areas. These can be expensive, but in these areas rates can be a lot lower in the off-season. Thai food is of course incredibly popular around the world. Don't be afraid of to try some of the fabulous noodle dishes or curries at any of the night markets and local restaurants, though perhaps avoid things like fresh fruit which has been on display. Many tourists take Thai cooking classes during their stay.

Be aware that Thailand does have a seedy side. Perhaps avoid the extremes of hedonism. Take care to avoid pickpockets and bag snatchers and, increasingly, scams directed at tourists. Ask hotel staff for advice and listen to what fellow travellers have to say. Health care in Thailand is generally excellent, but take the usual precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

In Bangkok do not miss the fabulous Buddhist temples and the markets, including the floating market, and take in a performance of classical Thai dance. For the more courageous there is traditional Thai massage. And why not take a trip on the sky train? It sure beats the crazy Bangkok traffic, amongst the worst in the world.

The majority of visitors to Thailand however make a beeline to the islands in the south. Travellers and holiday makers from all over the world head to world-famous locations such as Phuket and Krabi on the western side of the Thai peninsula and Koh Samui and other great island destinations in the Gulf of Thailand.

Choose your destination carefully, as you might find it just a little too quiet, or more likely, a bit too noisy for your liking. Please talk to us at Island Travel. We know all the best locations, whether it be for relaxing on the beach, exploring the fabulous limestone cliff islands, diving or snorkelling in the azure coloured water or attending a wild beach party.

In the north of the country many tourists head to the cultural capital Chiang Mai, and more than a few travellers take in a few days' trekking in the hill country. Increasingly popular are the meditation centres and resorts. But there are numerous attractions all over Thailand, far too many to be listed here. Thailand can also be a tourist trap. So why not let us take you just that little bit off the beaten track.

For further details please visit the Lonely Planet Website: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thailand#ixzz3guSIuavg>