

About Bangkok

Bangkok is a modern, cosmopolitan city with many cultural and historic sites, and an abundant choice of dining venues in addition to those in the conference hotels. Offering our best to visitors is the Thai tradition. Here are some key points to keep in mind when in Bangkok during January:

The Weather

January is best time to be in the kingdom where temperatures are in the 20s - low 30s C (70-90s F) with generally no rain.

Time

Time in Thailand is 7 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+7)

Money and Currency

Thai coins include 1, 2, 5, and 10 Baht and 25 and 50 Satang pieces. There are 100 Satangs in one Baht. Banknotes are available in denominations of 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1,000 Baht.

The most commonly used coin is the 10 baht and the most commonly used note is the 100 Baht.

The current exchange rates for Thai Baht as of June 2016 is as below. Please check for definite rates before your departure.

USD 1.00 = Baht 34

EUR 1.00 = Baht 39

GBP 1.00 = Baht 49

JPY 100 = Baht 33

AUD 1.00 = Baht 25.4

SGD 1.00 = Baht 25.6

There are numerous kiosks at Suvarnabhumi International Airport for changing money. The rates are competitive.

Language

English is widely understood, particularly in Bangkok where it is the major commercial language after Thai. English and some European languages are spoken in most hotels, shops, and restaurants in major tourist destinations, and Thai-English road and street signs are found nationwide.

Bangkok International Airport

Suvarnabhumi (Bangkok) International Airport (BKK) is located 35 kilometers east of Bangkok and about 45-60 minutes via expressway to most hotels. Don Mueang Airport (DMK), located approximately 20 kilometers north of downtown, serves some domestic flights and all of the operations of Thai AirAsia, including its international flights.

Passport and Visa

All visitors entering Thailand must possess a valid passport with an expiration date at least 6 months from the date of entry into the country. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs www.mfa.go.th oversees immigration and visa issues. Check the website or the nearest Thai embassy or consulate for application procedures and costs. Should you require any supporting documents to obtain a visa, please contact the QSMT Symposium 2017 Event Organizer: qsmt2017@cdmthailand.com.

Tourist Visa Exemption

Passport holders from the following 49 countries and territories are not required to obtain a visa when entering the Kingdom of Thailand for tourism purposes and will be permitted to stay for a period not exceeding 30 days per visit. Foreigners entering Thailand at the immigration checkpoints bordering neighboring countries are allowed to stay for 15 days per visit, except (1) Malaysian nationals who cross the border from Malaysia, (2) Nationals of the G7 countries: USA, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan, will be granted a stay of not more than 30 days per visit. In addition, such nationals who hold diplomatic and official passports are also practically exempted from visa for tourism.

Australia	Greece	Malaysia	Slovenia
Austria	Hong Kong	Monaco	Spain
Bahrain	Hungary	The Netherlands	South Africa
Belgium	Iceland	New Zealand	Sweden
* Brazil	Indonesia	Norway	Switzerland
Brunei Darussalam	Ireland	Oman	Turkey
Canada	Israel	* Peru	United Arab Emirates
Czech Republic	Italy	Philippines	United Kingdom
Denmark	Japan	Poland	United States of America
Estonia	* Korea (ROK)	Portugal	Vietnam
Finland	Kuwait	Qatar	
France	Liechtenstein	Singapore	
Germany	Luxembourg	Slovakia	

*Thailand holds bilateral agreements on visa exemption for holders of diplomatic, official and ordinary passports with Brazil, the Republic of Korea and Peru, for visits not exceeding 90 days. Nationals of these three countries are thus exempt from visa requirements and are permitted to enter and stay in Thailand for a period not to exceed 90 days.

Visa on Arrival

Passport holders from the 19 countries listed below can obtain a visa on arrival in Thailand for a stay of no more than 15 days. Visa on arrival can be obtained at Suvarnabhumi (Bangkok) International Airport (BKK), Don Mueang Airport (DMK), Phuket International Airport (HKT), and other international ports or checkpoints.

Requirements:

- The visit must be strictly for tourism.
- Visitors must have a confirmed return ticket, to show that they are flying out of Thailand within 15 days of the date of entry, as appropriate. Open tickets do not qualify. Traveling overland out of Thailand by train, bus, or private car to or through bordering nations such as Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia (including en route to Singapore), or Myanmar is not accepted as proof of exiting Thailand.
- You may be asked to show your return air ticket upon entering Thailand. If you do not possess a ticket to show you will be exiting Thailand within 15 days as required, you will most likely be refused entry.
- It will also be necessary to prove that you have funds of at least Baht 20,000 per person during your stay in Thailand. A fee of Baht 1,900 is payable upon entry and is subject to change without notice.

Andorra	Ethiopia	Maldives	Saudi Arabia
Bhutan	India	Malta	Taiwan

Bulgaria
China
Cyprus

Kazakhstan
Latvia
Lithuania

Mauritius
Romania
San Marino

Ukraine
Uzbekistan

For more information, please consult <http://www.mfa.go.th>

Customs

For personal use, one liter of any alcoholic beverage and 200 cigarettes, plus reasonable personal effects (such as one still camera, one movie or video camera, personal jewelry, etc.) may be brought in duty free and taken out upon departure. Unlimited foreign currency, traveler's cheques, and money orders may be brought into the country, but any amount over USD 10,000 must be declared upon entry. Amounts taken out of Thailand may never exceed the amount brought into the country.

Connectivity

Internet at the hotel

Every guest staying at either of the conference hotels during the symposium is entitled to in-room high-speed Wi-Fi at no additional charge.

Telephone and Cell Phone

As Thailand has a well-developed mobile telecommunications infrastructure, visitors can use their own mobile phone if their service provider has enabled international roaming. However, relying on the international roaming services of your current service provider can be very expensive.

A prepaid Thai SIM card with an international (GSM) cell phone is generally a less costly alternative while in Thailand. A Thai GSM SIM card allows visitors to make local calls at very low prices. Both Thai SIM cards for purchase and unlocked phones for rent are available at Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang airports.

Thai telephone numbers are composed of nine digits, with the first digit always being zero. When dialing Thai numbers from outside Thailand, the leading zero should be dropped, but within Thailand, all nine numbers should be dialed, even if the call is made in a single area with the same area code.

Thailand Country Code: +66

Area code for Bangkok: 2

Public Transportation

One of the easiest and most economical means of travel around traffic-choked Bangkok is via the Skytrain (BTS) or the MRT subway. The BTS network, which has an elevated rail system, has two lines: the Silom line from Bang Wa to the National Stadium and the longer Sukhumvit line from Mo Chit northern bus terminal to Bearing in the easternmost section of the city. The two lines connect at Siam Station. The Skytrain operates every day from 06.00 – 24.00 hrs. Tickets are available in all Skytrain stations from a manned window or easy-to-use ticket machines. InterContinental and Holiday Inn Bangkok are 3 minutes walking distance to BTS Chitlom station on Sukhumvit Line.

The MRT subway or metro system has 18 stations covering the northern and eastern suburbs and central city areas. It operates between 06.00 – 24.00 hrs.

The MRT and BTS Sky Train intersect at the following stations, enabling passengers to connect to the different routes:

MRT Subway

Sukhumvit Station
Chatuchak Park Station
Silom Station

BTS Sky Train

Asok Station
Mo Chit Station
Sala Daeng Station

Both are modern transportation systems highly recommended for getting around in Bangkok. Prices for BTS vary between Baht 15–Baht 55 per ride, while prices for MRT vary between Baht 16–Baht 42 per ride. There are no transfer tickets, so tickets for each system must be purchased separately as needed.

Airport Rail Link is a high-speed train service facilitating travel to Suvarnabhumi Airport. The train covers approximately 28 kilometers with 8 stations from Phayathai to Suvarnabhumi Airport. It connects to BTS at Phayathai Station and operates daily from 6.00 – 24.00 hrs. Passengers must carry their luggage themselves and transfer to a taxi or BTS once in Bangkok proper.

Taxis

Metered taxis are readily available and can be hailed when seen cruising the streets. They are usually air-conditioned, and as most drivers have limited knowledge of English, it is suggested that the destination be written in Thai or the hotel card used for ease of communication. Fares start at Baht 35 for the first 3 kilometers, with a small incremental increase per additional kilometer or equivalent waiting period. For most rides in downtown Bangkok, the fare should not exceed 100 Baht unless traffic is extremely heavy. All taxis in Bangkok are required to use the meter, but some drivers may try instead to bargain for a flat fee when it is late at night or when the weather is very bad (heavy rainfall) and the demand for taxis is higher. Apart from the meter fee, any expressway tolls incurred during the trip must be paid by the passenger. Tipping the taxi driver is not really necessary in Bangkok, but rounding up the figure on the meter can facilitate the payment. A surcharge of Baht 50 is added to the fare when you board a taxi from either Suvarnabhumi (Bangkok) International Airport or Don Mueang Airport, both of which have very efficient taxi ranks available just outside the terminals.

To get an idea of the cost of a taxi ride, please consult <http://www.worldtaximeter.com/bangkok>

Changing Money

US dollar traveler's cheques can be conveniently cashed at banks, bank kiosks, and authorized moneychangers. Most hotels and many restaurants and shops accept major credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

ATMs are widespread and are the easiest way to get Thai Baht, as most of them will accept cards issued by any of the major international banking networks.

Banks

Banks provide standard services nationwide, Monday through Friday, except public and bank holidays, between 08.30-15.30 hrs. Bank currency exchange centers operate from 07.00-21.00 hrs daily, including holidays. Most banks in Thailand also operate sub-branches at major shopping centers, which are usually open from 10.00-20.00 hrs. ATM machines are well-placed at central locations and are in service 24 hours a day.

Business Hours

Government offices are generally open between 8.30 and 16.30 hrs with a noon–13.00 hrs lunch break, Monday through Friday, except on public holidays. Private businesses maintain similar hours. Department stores are generally open from 10.00-21.00 hrs daily.

Tipping

It is customary to tip hotel personnel who have given good personal service. A 10% tip is appreciated in restaurants, particularly where the service charge is waived. When service is included, which it often is, rounding the bill up or leaving a small amount of additional cash is appreciated.

Electricity

The electrical current is 220 volt AC 50-cycle. Two flat pin-type sockets (sometimes 3-pin sockets) are used, so it is useful to carry a travel plug adapter kit. The better hotels also provide adapters and converters, just ask at the front desk.

Drinking Water

It is advisable to drink only bottled water, which is widely available. It is not recommended to consume crushed ice; however, cubed ice is made from purified water and is potable. Avoid purchasing unsealed drinks or ice cream sold by street vendors. The Holiday Inn Bangkok and the InterContinental Bangkok provide two complimentary bottles of water daily.

Health and Medications

As the climate of Thailand is hot and humid (although considerably less so in January), it is recommended that you use sunscreen, wear a hat, and use mosquito repellent to protect against mosquito bites both during the day and at night.

The international health and medical insurance should permit a transfer or repatriation in case of emergency. There modern hospital and emergency facilities in Bangkok and the conference organizers and hotel staff can advise if required.

If you are on any regular medications, you should bring either your prescription or details of your medication with you to Thailand because brand names and doses may differ. All medications should be kept in their original labeled container to avoid problems with Customs upon arrival at the airport. In Bangkok, pharmacies are plentiful and most pharmacists can speak English.

Emergency Numbers

Emergency Call Center (Police, Fire and Ambulance)	191
Police	191
Highway Police	1193
Fire Department	199
Ambulance	154
Tourism Police (English, French, and German spoken)	1155
Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)	1672
Crime Suppression	195
Suvarnabhumi Airport (Call Center)	+66 (0) 2 132 1888

