

## lonely planet Hotels & Hostels

Want more Sleeping recommendations than we could ever pack into this little ol' book? Craving more detail – including extended reviews and photographs? Want to read reviews by other travellers and be able to post your own? Just make your way over to [lonelyplanet.com/hotels](https://lonelyplanet.com/hotels) and check out our thorough list of independent reviews, then reserve your room simply and securely.

## SLEEPING

### top picks

See also our top views (p203) and top romantic lodgings (p203).

- Sukhothai Hotel (p215)
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- Oriental Hotel (p212)
- Old Bangkok Inn (p204)
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# SLEEPING

After a decade of little excitement, Bangkok has been going through a veritable hotel-building boom during the last couple of years. Particularly in the midrange and top-end, where even the Millennium Hilton (p212) was finally completed, new properties have been competing to outdo each other and the established dames. And Thai designers have given the long-suffering midrange fans several new options that sit firmly in the chic, urbane 21st century. Put simply, Bangkok is home to some of the finest hotels in the world.

Like the city itself, Bangkok's accommodation is spread far and wide. Your choices are modern Sukhumvit, the business centre around Silom, the scenic riverside, the backpacker enclave of Banglamphu, the shopping district around Siam Sq, or boisterous Chinatown. To get a feel for which neighbourhood you might fancy before you book, see our cheat sheet on p204. And remember, Bangkok traffic can be almost apocalyptic...so if you can be near the Skytrain, Metro or river ferry you'll save time.

If money is your main consideration, then there's a good chance you'll end up on or near the famous Th Khao San backpacking mecca (p72). Th Silom and Th Sukhumvit cater mainly to midrange and top-end budgets. Interesting options in the low end of the midrange can be found in Siam Sq, Ko Ratanakosin and Chinatown.

The best way to get a discount is to book online (p208). Indeed, you're likely to pay significantly more if you just walk into a top-end hotel. The best time for discounts is outside Bangkok's peak season, November to March and July and August. Discounts can also be had through Thai travel agencies or at Bangkok's airport hotel desks. With few exceptions, Bangkok accommodation wants you to check in at 2pm and check out at noon.

## LONGER-TERM RENTALS

Bangkok is loaded with serviced apartment buildings aimed at the executive market. While not cheap, they work out very well when compared with hotels offering similar (or more often inferior) rooms and suites; internet specials are common and some apartments were renting for US\$62 a day when we looked. Rates usually include daily cleaning, kitchenette, internet and direct-dial telephones, plus on-site business and fitness centres and a pool.

Several options are concentrated on centrally located Soi Lang Suan, between Chid Lom and Lumpini, while others gather on the other side of Lumpini Park in the Silom business district. The Centrepoint group (www.centrepoint.com) is the biggest manager of serviced apartments, with seven buildings across Bangkok. Others that we like include:

**Siri Sathorn** (Map p112; ☎ 0 2266 2345; www.sirisathorn.com; 27 Soi Sala Daeng 1, Th Silom; daily from 5000B, per month 1-bedroom 80,000-98,000B, 2-bedroom 120,000-240,000B; 📶 🚶 🚲 🚿) Chic modern apartments starting at 60 sq metres; shuttle bus, satisfying service.

**House By The Pond** (Map pp118-19; ☎ 0 2259 3543; www.housebythepond.com; 230/3 Soi Sainumthip 2, Soi

22, Th Sukhumvit; daily 1600-2800B, per month 22,000-43,000B; 📶 🚶 🚲 🚿) Older and more affordable.

Pathumwan House (p211) has more modest rooms at more modest prices, or if you're on a microscopic budget the guesthouses around Soi Ngam Duphli welcome long stayers. Check the 'Property Guide' in the *Bangkok Post* on Thursdays for rental listings, or:

**www.sabaai.com** Most professional site for apartments

**www.mrroomfinder.com** Wide range, detailed search options

**www.bangkokapartments.info** Cheap places

**bangkok.craigslist.co.th** Mainly long leases

## KO RATANAKOSIN & THONBURI

Bangkok's oldest districts, the royal island of Ko Ratanakosin and Thonburi across the river, make an excellent base for exploring the city's major historic sights and experiencing life by the Mae Nam Chao Phraya. Until relatively recently, however, the Banglamphu budget area (opposite) at the northern end of Ko Ratanakosin was the only place you could stay.

That has changed with the opening of four small, intimate riverside abodes that are among the most atmospheric lodgings in the city. Given their small number of rooms, advance bookings are recommended.

### CHAKRABONGSE VILLAS

Map p56

Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2622 3356; www.thaivillas.com; 396 Th Maharat, Ko Ratanakosin; villas 10,000-25,000B; 📍 Tha Tien; 📶 🚶 🚲 🚿

Prince Chakrabongse Bhuvanath's 19th-century mansion has been converted and adapted to become a luxurious slice of history with a private, personal touch. Set around a garden adorned with a modest pool are four villas fittingly kitted out with traditional furnishings and silks, plus modern luxuries, in both Thai and Chinese styles. An open-sided dining pavilion is literally right on the river, with splendid views across to Wat Arun; meals are cooked to order using the freshest ingredients – delightful.

### AURUM: THE RIVER PLACE

Map p56

Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2622 2248; www.aurum-bangkok.com; 396 Th Maharat, Ko Ratanakosin; tw/d 3600/4100B; 📍 Tha Tien; 📶 🚶 🚲 🚿

At the river end of a row of old Chinese godowns, the Aurum manages to feel at home here despite its faux-Parisian style. The 12 tastefully furnished rooms are by no means big, but the windows are and make the most of the not-wholly-uninterrupted river views. Breakfast is included.

### ARUN RESIDENCE

Map p56

Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2221 9158; www.arunresidence.com; 396 Th Maharat, Ko Ratanakosin; d 3100-5000B; 📍 Tha Tien; 📶 🚶 🚲 🚿

A couple of minutes' walk from Wat Pho along another soi (lane) of godowns, the Arun Residence is a romantic retreat because of its Deck restaurant (p154), bar and unrivalled views across to Wat Arun. All rooms are fitted out in charismatic midcentury décor and modern luxuries (including wi-fi and cable broadband), but some are dark and only the larger suite has clear views (from its private terrace). Wherever you stay, you'll find it hard to drag yourself away from the sunset views from the bar.

# top picks

## ROMANTIC STAYS

### Money is No Object

- **Ma Du Zi** (p217) Contemporary luxury, relaxed chic
- **Oriental** (p212) Conrad, Maugham, Coward...and you
- **Eugenia** (p217) Explorer-style escapism
- **Chakrabongse Villas** (left) Riverfront royal residence

### Affordable Romance

- **Ibrik Resort** (below) Simple west-bank seclusion
- **Arun Residence** (left) Sunsets over Wat Arun
- **Old Bangkok Inn** (p204) Luxury shop house living, family feel
- **River View Guest House** (p208) Million-baht views from front, upper rooms

### IBRIK RESORT

Map p56

Boutique \$\$

☎ 0 2848 9220; www.ibrikresort.com; 256 Soi Wat Rakhang, Th Arun Amarin, Thonburi; d 3200-3500B; 📍 Tha Wang Lang; 📶 🚶 🚲 🚿

Fancy being near the river? If you roll out of bed in this three-room resort you could quite literally roll right into the river (which, given this is the Chao Phraya, is not recommended). The resort is in a white wooden house and with silks and four-post beds the rooms are perfect for a romantic getaway that won't feel forced. Note the Moonlight room has no view, but occupants can use the communal riverside terrace. Price includes breakfast. There is also a sister property in town on **Th Sathon** (Map pp108-9; ☎ 0 2211 3470; 235/16 Th Sathon Tai).

## BANGLAMPHU

At the northern end of Ko Ratanakosin is Banglamphu (p67), a truly unique backpacker phenomenon and the world's greatest clearing house of international travellers. Centred around Th Khao San – better known simply as 'the Khao San Road' or 'KSR' – Banglamphu has graduated from the days of S partan cells for 50B to include a fast-growing range of mid-range options. Of course, dirt-cheap rooms are still available and whatever budget you're travelling with, fierce competition means you'll get the best value for your baht in Banglamphu.



Just 50m from the noise and neon of Khao San, Shambara feels a world away. The century-old traditional wooden home has nine tiny rooms that share two clean showers and toilets. For the rooms alone it's not great value, but you're buying into the chilled, convivial atmosphere. Price includes coffee and toast; wi-fi is 1B per minute.

### ROOF VIEW PLACE Map pp68-9 Hotel \$

☎ 081-805 8846; Soi 6, Th Samsen; s 450B, d 550-800B; 📍 Tha Phra Athit or Tha Thewet; 🏠 📺 📶  
Opened in 2007, the Roof View embraces a sparse but – at this price – relatively stylish minimalism that makes it the pick among an otherwise uninspiring bunch in this quiet village area. The rooms we saw were squeaky clean and very white. The sixth-floor roof does indeed have fine district views, but so far nowhere to sit. There's a winch for backpacks but no lift. Wi-fi costs 50B per day, and guests can use the kitchen in the lobby.

### BOWORN BB Map pp68-9 Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2629 1073; [www.bowornbb.com](http://www.bowornbb.com); 335 Th Phra Sumen; r 600-700B; 📍 Tha Phra Athit, 🚗 air-con 511 & 512, ordinary 2 & 82; 🏠 📺 📶  
Cultural chameleons will love this antique neighbourhood of green-and-yellow shophouses and flip-flop-clad families with hardly a sign of tourist incursions. Boworn has bland but clean rooms with wet-all-over bathrooms and a fresh coat of paint. But it's the familial atmosphere centred around the café-lobby and the garden rooftop that are most attractive – and the *aroi* (delicious) green curries. Wi-fi is available for 100B per day.

### LAMPHU HOUSE Map pp68-9 Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2629 5861; [www.lamphuhouse.com](http://www.lamphuhouse.com); 75-77 Soi Rambutri, Th Chakraphong; d from 590B; 📍 Tha Phra Athit, 🚗 ordinary 15, 30 & 53; 🏠 📺 📶  
A refreshing oasis, Lamphu House creates a mellow mood with its hidden, relatively quiet location and breezy, smartly decorated rooms. The building was a hospital in another era and the spirit of cleanliness lives on. Some have balconies overlooking the green courtyard, and cheaper fan rooms with shared bathrooms are also available. All up, great value – book as far ahead as you can.

### VILLA GUEST HOUSE

Map pp68-9 Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2281 7009; 230 Soi 1, Th Samsen; s 300B, d 400-600B; 📍 Tha Phra Athit, 🚗 air-con 506, ordinary 53  
Hidden behind a wooden door at the end of a nondescript lane, the long-running Villa is a quiet garden oasis amid the village life of Soi 1. The dark interiors of this 19th century nobleman's teak house ooze history, written in 70 years worth of detritus accumulated by the family of the current owners. It is also home to 10 simple rooms (all with fan and shared bathroom); reservations are strongly recommended.

### PRASURI GUEST HOUSE

Map pp68-9 Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2280 1428; [prasuri\\_gh\\_bkk@hotmail.com](mailto:prasuri_gh_bkk@hotmail.com); Soi Phrasuli; s 220-380B, d 280-420B; 📍 Tha Phra Athit; 🚗 air-con 511 & 512, ordinary 2 & 82; 🏠 📺 📶  
It doesn't get much more everyday Thai than this simple old guesthouse in a leafy *soi* northeast of Th Khao San. Appropriately in a neighbourhood of family-run shophouses, the Prasuri doubles as a 30B restaurant, shop for random grocery items and internet café that sees crowds of uniformed Thai schoolchildren battling it out on video games during lunch and after school. The rooms are tired but quiet and clean, and all have bathrooms.

### PRAKORP'S HOUSE

Map pp68-9 Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2281 1345; fax 0 2629 0714; 52 Th Khao San; s/d 160/250B; 📍 Tha Phra Athit, 🚗 air-con 511 & 512, ordinary 2 & 82  
One of the last old-style guesthouses on Th Khao San, Prakorp's offers both the good and bad of the street's past: a charismatic old wooden house set back from the road and dire concrete cells in the older street-front building. Staff are friendly (significant because this is not always the case on KSR) and the food is delicious. The five simple rooms in the old house are obviously the ones to go for.

If you're arriving late in the day in peak season, rooms can be hard to find if you don't have a reservation. An alternative is: **Royal Hotel** (Map pp68-9; ☎ 0 2222 9111-26; fax 0 2224 2083; cnr Th Ratchadamnoen Klang & Th Atsadang; d 1200-1700B; 🏠 📺 📶 ) Bangkok's third-oldest hotel

## GREEN HOTELS

Hotels might seem to be gobbling up the landscape, but many are watching what they eat when it comes to world resources. Green Leaf Foundation, a collaborative environmental organisation, has recognised a number of Bangkok hotels for cutting energy and water use and garbage output, and raising awareness of environmental issues among their staff. Among them, green hotels we recommend include **Bangkok Marriott Resort & Spa Hotel** (p220), **Banyan Tree Hotel** (p215), **Dusit Thani** (p213), **Grand China Princess** (p208), **Grand Hyatt Erawan** (p210) and the **Malaysia Hotel** (p215). See [www.greenleafthai.org](http://www.greenleafthai.org) for specifics of what they have done.

Several smaller hotels have also adopted social and environmentally responsible practices, notably **Phranakorn Nornlen** (below) and **Reflections Rooms** (p220).

(aka Hotel Ratanakosin), so yes, rather old. Rooms vary markedly.

## THEWET & DUSIT

The district north of Banglamphu near the National Library is known as 'Thewet'. Guesthouses line the *soi* side of Th Sri Ayuthaya, popular with Asia-savvy budgeters who are generally a little older than the Khao San crowd. This is a lovely, leafy area with a morning market, a busy neighbourhood temple and easy access to the river ferry. The only drawbacks are that downtown Bangkok is many traffic jams away and the street is prone to flooding during the rainy season.

The surrounding neighbourhood of Dusit has a few large package-tour hotels.

### PHRANAKORN NORNLEN

Map p79 Boutique Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2628 8188-90; [www.phranakorn-nornlen.com](http://www.phranakorn-nornlen.com); 46 Thewet Soi 1, Th Krung Kasem, Thewet; s/d 1800/2200B; 📍 Tha Thewet; 🏠 📺 📶

Everyone seems to love this small, arty boutique hotel where smiles come readily to faces. Maybe it's the garden setting in which the converted wooden building stands, or perhaps the individual rooms with tall showers and rustic charm. Or perhaps it's the social and environmental responsibility of the owners, who provide a very healthy organic breakfast but also encourage guests to head out and patronise the local businesses; the owners also run an NGO to help children. For us it was the community ambience, fostered by the wonderfully engaging staff. It's highly recommended.

### SHANTI LODGE Map p79 Hostel \$

☎ 0 2281 2497; Th Si Ayuthaya, Thewet; dm 200B, s 400B, d 750-850B; 📍 Tha Thewet, 🚗 ordinary 53 & 30; 🏠 📺 📶

Nobody does backpacker chic like Shanti Lodge, where a rambling wooden house with a maze of artfully decorated air-con rooms crouches above a blissed-out garden café downstairs; think lolling, guitar-strumming, story-swapping and good coffee. The staff are, and have been for years, prone to a certain ice-queen indifference that annoys some travellers but is ignored by most. That aside, it's a real gem.

### SRI AYUTTAYA GUEST HOUSE

Map p79 Hostel \$

☎ 0 2282 5942; Th Si Ayuthaya, Thewet; s 350B, d 600-850B; 📍 Tha Thewet, 🚗 ordinary 53 & 30; 🏠 📺 📶

Offering a decent alternative to Shanti Lodge, the Sri Ayuttaya has romantic air-con rooms with pretty hardwood floors, exposed brick and other stylish touches. It's not as social as Shanti, and service isn't much more forthcoming, either. But it's still superior to many Khao San-area flophouses charging the same dough.

### BANGKOK INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL Map p79 Hostel \$

☎ 0 2282 0950; [www.hihostels.com](http://www.hihostels.com); 25/2 Th Phitsanulok, Dusit; dm 120-170B, r 250-500B; 📍 Tha Thewet, 🚗 ordinary 16 & 509; 🏠 📺 📶

In a dull location east of Th Samsen and the Thewet budget abodes, this HI was being expanded when we passed. The old rooms and dorms, however, remained cramped and tired. The main reason to stay is the generally enthusiastic nature of the guests and the Thai volunteers who lead free tours for a chance to practise their English. Take 50B off if you're a member.

## CHINATOWN

Many visitors venture into this neighbourhood in search of a little more cultural immersion than can be found in the multicultural

Disneyland of Khao San. By and large Chinatown's hotels suffer from the same sort of total charisma bypass familiar in, well, Chinese cities. But the rates and rooms communicate in the international language for 'value', and recent additions have added some class. The edges of the district and the area around Hualamphong train station have some appealing cheap options among the dross, while the Indian district of Phahurat is less expensive and caters to low-end business travellers from the subcontinent. But do watch your pockets and bags around the Hualamphong area.

### SHANGHAI INN Map p84 Boutique \$\$

☎ 0 2221 2121; [www.shanghai-inn.com](http://www.shanghai-inn.com); 479 Th Yaowarat; r 2800-4000B; Hualamphong, Tha Ratchawong, air-con 507, ordinary 73; The Shanghai is a real boutique place that brings a technicolour interpretation of '30s Shanghai to manic Th Yaowarat. The 55 excellent-value rooms are kitted out in Chinese-style four-post beds, bright-painted walls and as many as 10 hanging silk lights. Wi-fi is available throughout, and breakfast is included. The best place in Chinatown.

### GRAND CHINA PRINCESS

Map p84 Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2224 9977; [www.grandchina.com](http://www.grandchina.com); 215 Th Yaowarat; r 2200-4200B; Hualamphong,

### Tha Ratchawong, air-con 507, ordinary 73;

A certifiable monstrosity from the outside, this hotel in the heart of Chinatown is popular with groups and has nondescript, but comfortable rooms buoyed by great views. The top floor has a panoramic rotating restaurant to make your dreams of gaudy Asia complete. There's pretty good service and big discounts online.

### KRUNG KASEM SRIKUNG HOTEL

Map p84 Hotel \$

☎ 0 2225 8900; [srikung\\_htl@yahoo.com](mailto:srikung_htl@yahoo.com); 1860 Th Krung Kasem; d 650B; ordinary 25, 35 & 53, Hualamphong;

Across the *khlong* from Hualamphong station, this institutional-style high-rise won't win any design awards but the clean, sizable rooms are fair value. Rear rooms (with even numbers) are better because while the front rooms have train station views, they are buffeted by street noise.

### RIVER VIEW GUEST HOUSE

Map p84 Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2234 5429; [www.riverviewbkk.com](http://www.riverviewbkk.com); 768 Soi Phanurangsi, Th Songwat; r 450-900B; Hualamphong, Tha Si Phraya, ordinary 36 & 93; Overlooking a bend in the river, the aptly named River View has an awesome and af-

## BOOKING ONLINE: JUST DO IT

'You know,' said the woman as she glanced conspiratorially around the reception of one of Bangkok's top hotels, 'if you book online the rates are much cheaper... about 30% usually.' We were offered similar surprisingly honest advice several times while researching this guide, with the general message being that for midrange and top-end hotels booking ahead gets you discounts you can't even contemplate when you walk in.

As another front office manager explained: 'Sorry, but you probably won't get anywhere bargaining with the front desk girls because they take a commission on any rooms they sell, so they want to keep the price as high as possible.' Ah, so that's it. Then she handed over a hotel business card and said: 'Here, call this number and you'll get a discount automatically.' So, in theory, we could have called from the guest phone in the lobby, reserved a room at the discount rate, had a drink in the bar and checked in 15 minutes later having saved 30%.

Even during the January peak season hefty discounts can be found by looking around online, particularly in the midrange. And even Th Khao San budget places offer modest advance booking discounts, though the cheapest places might still engage in a bit of old-style, person-to-person haggling.

Of course, online booking also has its dangers...read LP author Karla Zimmerman's account of her unwitting transformation into voyeur in the boxed text, p216.

### Recommended Sites

For independent reviews rather than endless superlatives, Lonely Planet's Hotels & Hostels ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) features thorough reviews from authors and traveller feedback, and a booking facility. For an idea of the sort of discounts you're looking at, independent website Travelfish ([www.travelfish.org](http://www.travelfish.org)) has a very handy list of nothing more than the hotel name and current online price at the bottom of its Bangkok pages.

## ROOM RATES – WHAT YOU GET FOR YOUR MONEY

Accommodation in this book is broken down into three categories. We've listed the mid-season rates and they include the ++, which means 10% service and 7% government tax. These are the walk-in rates quoted to us, and it should be noted that big discounts are available most of the time if you book online (see the boxed text, [opposite](#)).

\$\$\$	more than 4500B a night
\$\$	1000B to 4500B a night
\$	less than 1000B a night

So what do you get for your money? Bangkok's growing array of top-end hotels start at about 4500B and climb many times higher. In the top tier rooms start at more than 10,000B, but in most of the luxurious design and boutique hotels, and the vast majority of the international brands, you're looking at about 6000B to 9000B, before online discounting.

You can pay up to 4500B for a midrange room, too, though with discounting most are available for between 3000B and 4000B. Of course, more-modest properties have more-modest rates – modesty seemingly defined by the style of the décor. Thus the older places are often quite cheap, while trendier new places are more pricey.

The days of 50B beds in Banglamphu are over, but those on wafer-thin budgets can still get a dorm bed for between 150B and 400B, with a shared bathroom. More comfortable and stylish rooms are available for upwards of 800B, price rising with size and location.

fordable location between Silom and Chinatown, steps from the river. The front rooms with small balconies have views you'd pay several times as much for in the nearby top-end hotels, and the rooftop bar-restaurant is one of the best sunset views in town. Most are fan-conditioned; air-con costs more.

River View is hidden among small lanes and can be tough to find. Heading north on Th Charoen Krung from Th Si Phraya, take a left on to Th Songwat (before the Chinatown Arch), then the second left onto Soi Phanurangsi. You'll start to see signs at this point.

### TRAIN INN Map p84 Hostel \$

☎ 0818-195 544; [www.thetraininn.com](http://www.thetraininn.com); 428 Th Hualamphong; r 450-900B; Hualamphong exit 3, ordinary 36 & 9;

In a strip of tired old budget places directly opposite the train station, the clean, secure and relatively funky Train Inn is a breath of fresh air. Owner Jana maintains a young, friendly and helpful atmosphere and her 41 rooms are hostel-style compact; the '1st class' rooms are best; others can be noisy, so ask to see a few. Cable broadband is included in the 1st-class price and 200B per day in other rooms.

### BAAN HUALAMPONG

Map p84 Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2639 8054; [www.baanhualampong.com](http://www.baanhualampong.com); 336/20 Soi 21, Th Charoen Krung; dm 220B, s 290B, d 520-700B; Hualamphong;

Off a relatively quiet *soi* a few minutes' walk from the station, this old-style wood-and-concrete guesthouse has developed a loyal following among those seeking a mix of family atmosphere and backpacker self-sufficiency, centred around the communal areas and kitchen. The owner speaks English and German and is a font of knowledge – see the website for the cheapest possible ways of getting here.

## SIAM SQUARE & PRATUNAM

As central as Bangkok gets, this area is conveniently located on the Skytrain near shopping centres and loads of high-rise chain hotels. In the midrange, a devoted cast of *túk-túk* and taxi drivers throng the entrances of hotels zealously pouncing on every map-toting victim. If you're a pedestrian wanderer, you'll be happier at a smaller hotel that is less of a target. Soi Kasem San 1, off Th Phra Ram I, has a cluster of nice guesthouses for the early-to-bed, early-to-rise travellers. For more on the Siam Sq and Pratunam district, see p97.

### FOUR SEASONS HOTEL

Map pp98-9 Luxury Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2250 1000; [www.fourseasons.com/bangkok](http://www.fourseasons.com/bangkok); 155 Th Ratchadamri; d from 9000B; Ratchadamri;

A spectacular mural descending a grand staircase, ceilings adorned with neck-cranning

## THE INTERNET: MINIMUM SERVICE OR EXPENSIVE LUXURY?

If you're paying big bucks for a room should you then have to pay extortionate rates to use the internet? For most travellers, no matter how wealthy they are, the answer is a resounding 'no'. Most Bangkok hotels and a growing number of guesthouses provide either wi-fi or cable broadband (or sometimes both) in their rooms and public spaces. But as we researched Bangkok's hotels for this edition, too often we found ourselves in conversations something like this:

LP: 'So, does this room come with internet?'

Hotel: 'Yes, all our rooms have high-speed/wi-fi internet.'

LP: 'That's great. Is it free, or do I have to pay?'

Hotel, somewhat sheepishly: 'It costs 17B a minute but you only pay to a maximum of 717B per day.'

LP: '17B a minute!!! That's more than 50c a minute! I'd reach 717B in... (calculating)... 42 minutes!'

Uncomfortable silence.

Hotel: 'Umm... now if you look out here you can see these rooms have wonderful views...'

Right. To put this into perspective, the owner of one small boutique hotel (which like many smaller Bangkok properties charges lower room rates and *doesn't* charge extra for internet use) explained that her total monthly broadband internet bill was less than 800B. Total. So internet costs in Bangkok are low.

Sure, if you can afford to spend hundreds of dollars on a room (or you're on the corporate tab) the extra US\$25 might not matter. But even (especially?) billionaires know value, or as one executive told us, know 'highway robbery' when they see it.

So what can you do? Put simply, stay with someone else. A growing number of Bangkok hotels are including internet use in the price, so finding one to match your budget shouldn't be too hard. Indeed, cheaper hotels seem to be leading the way on this front, and many midrange places have joined in. Ask or check their website to find out.

artwork and a library-quiet lobby punctuated with muscular columns give the Four Seasons a tone of relaxed opulence that continues into the lauded restaurants – especially Biscotti and Madison. These, and an open-air jungle courtyard, are probably more attractive than the 353 rooms.

### GRAND HYATT ERAWAN

Map pp98–9 Luxury Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2254 1234; [www.bangkok.hyatt.com](http://www.bangkok.hyatt.com); 494 Th Ratchadamri; d from 8800B; 📍 Chitlom;

🚗 🚶 🚲

The Erawan's neoclassical lobby, embellished with mature tropical trees, sets the tone in what is one of Bangkok's most-respected hotels. The 320 rooms are relatively big and well designed, with smart use of mirrors and well-positioned desks complementing an attractive modern Asian décor of hardwoods, silks and white marble. Rooms on the west side have the best views, overlooking the prestigious Bangkok Royal Sports Club racetrack. Annoyingly, the wi-fi internet costs a staggering 17B per minute, or a maximum of 717B for 24 hours.

### NAI LERT PARK HOTEL

Map pp98–9 Luxury Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2253 0123; [www.swissotel.com/bangkok-nai-lertpark](http://www.swissotel.com/bangkok-nai-lertpark); 2 Th Withayu (Wireless Rd); d from US\$185; 📍 Ploenchit 🚶 Tha Withayu; 🚗 🚶 🚲

Aiming for the *Wallpaper* crowd, new owner Raffles has taken the old Hilton, rebranded it as Swissotel and done as much as possible to convert it to Zen, but there's only so much you can do with a classic 1980s atrium (hang a lot of shiny stuff from the ceiling, apparently). Still, the rooms are impressive and, best of all, boast soothing views onto the jungle garden and shaded pool.

### SIAM@SIAM

 Map pp98–9 Boutique \$\$\$

☎ 0 2217 3000; [www.siamatsiam.com](http://www.siamatsiam.com); 865 Th Phra Ram I; d from 5700B; 📍 National Stadium;

🚗 🚶 🚲

From the moment you walk into this new hotel you get the feeling this 'design hotel and spa' has taken the concept of industrial design pretty much as far as it can go. Wire sculptures stand on polished concrete while railway sleepers seem to cover every exposed pylon. The 203 rooms occupy the 14th to 25th floors and have city views – those looking at National Stadium are best. Inside they are a world of concrete, rust, copper and wood, with dashes of orange; note that twin rooms have adjoining beds. Rates include breakfast and wi-fi internet.

### ASIA HOTEL

 Map pp98–9 Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2215 0808; [www.asiahotel.co.th](http://www.asiahotel.co.th); 296 Th Phayathai; r from 2600B; 📍 Ratchathewi; 🚗 🚶

The appropriately named Asia is the classic Asian midranger, sporting a wannabe luxurious lobby of polished granite floors, faux chandeliers and the constant din of noisy tourists. Rooms are reliable – nothing more – with the superior and deluxe options worth the extra baht. A covered walkway connects to the Skytrain.

### VIP GUEST HOUSE/GOLDEN HOUSE

Map pp98–9 Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2252 9535; [www.goldenhouses.net](http://www.goldenhouses.net); 1025/5-9 Th Ploenchit; r from 1400B; 📍 Chitlom; 🚗

The 27 clean, quiet and mainly bright rooms make this a good lower midrange choice in this otherwise pricey part of town. The price includes breakfast.

These next five places are in a mainly quiet *soi* just a few minutes walk west of the Siam shopping extravaganza. If you prefer spending your baht on shopping rather than sleeping, it's for you.

### PATHUMWAN HOUSE

 Map pp98–9 Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2612 3580; [www.pathumwanhouse.com](http://www.pathumwanhouse.com); 22 Soi Kasem San 1, Th Phra Ram I; d daily 1200-2300B, monthly 15,000-34,000B; 📍 National Stadium; 🚗

Tucked back in the crook of the *soi*, this friendly high-rise is mainly a long-term hotel but lots of dailies cycle through after striking out elsewhere. Rooms are a decent size but the cheapest are almost devoid of natural light, and the bathrooms we saw had showerheads mounted at about navel height. Your comings and goings will be announced by a collection of chirping caged birds.

### RENO HOTEL

 Map pp98–9 Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2215 0026; [www.renohotel.co.th](http://www.renohotel.co.th); 40 Soi Kasem San 1, Th Phra Ram I; d 1180-1550B; 📍 National Stadium; 🚗 🚶

This Vietnam War veteran has embraced the new millennium with colour and flair, making the best of its retro features (check out the monogrammed pool) and funking up the foyer and café, in particular. The 70 rooms remain fairly simple, the best being those with a balcony overlooking the pool, and service can be reluctant. But for the money (price includes breakfast), the Reno is a great, central deal.

### WENDY HOUSE

 Map pp98–9 Hostel \$\$

☎ 0 2214 1149-50; [www.wendyguesthouse.com](http://www.wendyguesthouse.com); Soi Kasem San 1, Th Phra Ram I; s/tw 900/1100B; 📍 National Stadium; 🚗 🚶

Wendy is a cheery backpacker joint with small but well-scrubbed rooms and tiled bathrooms. The 20 rooms are all nonsmoking, which is refreshing in this price bracket. Desk staff are sweet and the well-lit lobby is the sort of place you're likely to end up swapping stories with fellow travellers. Breakfast is included.

### A-ONE INN

 Map pp98–9 Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2215 3029; [www.aoneinn.com](http://www.aoneinn.com); 25/13-15 Soi Kasem San 1, Th Phra Ram I; d 600-850B; 📍 National Stadium; 🚗

A small family operation, busy A-One has 25 cosy and clean rooms with hardwood floors that live up to its advertising, offering value 'in the heart of town'. A-One is a wi-fi hotspot.

## RIVERSIDE & SILOM

Bangkok's most established and famous luxury hotels form a necklace along this stretch of the Mae Nam Chao Phraya. This is romantic Bangkok, where old colonial buildings wilt under the elements and twinkling fairy lights reflect in the water. If the top end is out of reach, there are a couple of cheapies that pass the mould-free test. For more on this part of Bangkok, see p106.

The Silom, Lumpini and Sathon areas are rather different to the riverside and bring a different range of accommodation. From stylish to spinstar, Silom's hotels sit in Bangkok's primary business district and are mainly popular with business travellers, airline staff and first-time tourists wanting to be near the neon and flesh of Patpong Market, Suan Lum Night Bazaar and easy access to the river.

Along east Th Sathon near Lumpini Park the trendy Sukhothai and Metropolitan hotels and the spa-like Banyan Tree make a splash among the sober embassies and office buildings. Just around the corner, but galaxies apart in price and comfort, are the survivors of Bangkok's original backpacker ghetto.

## RIVERSIDE

A combination of the Skytrain to Saphan Tak-sin and either a walk or ferry ride on the complimentary hotel ferries is the way to reach the

## FROM LITERATI TO GLITTERATI

Now a famous grand dame, the Oriental Hotel started its career as the seafarers' version of a Th Khao San guesthouse. The original owners, two Danish sea captains, traded the nest to Hans Niels Andersen, the founder of the formidable East Asiatic Company. Andersen transformed the hotel into a civilised palace of grand architecture and luxury standards. He hired an Italian architect, S Cardu, to design what is now the Author's Wing, which was the city's most fantastic building not constructed by the king.

The rest of the hotel's history relies on its famous guests. A Polish-born sailor named Joseph Conrad stayed here in 1888. The hotel brought him good luck: he got his first command on the ship *Otago*, from Bangkok to Port Adelaide, which in turn gave him ideas for several early stories. W Somerset Maugham stumbled into the hotel with an advanced case of malaria. In his feverish state, he heard the German manager arguing with the doctor about how a death in the hotel would hurt business. Maugham's overland Southeast Asian journey is recorded in *Gentleman in the Parlour: A Record of a Journey from Rangoon to Haiphong*, which gave literary appeal to the hotel. Other notable guests have included Noel Coward, Graham Greene, John le Carré, James Michener, Gore Vidal and Barbara Cartland. Some modern-day writers claim that an Oriental stay will overcome writer's block – though we suspect any writer staying these days would need a very generous advance indeed.

river's top-end hotels. We've got to say, the hotel ferries are a very civilised – and enjoyable – way to get around in Bangkok. Most hotels also run boats to River City (p137).

### ORIENTAL HOTEL Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2659 9000; [www.mandarinoriental.com/bangkok](http://www.mandarinoriental.com/bangkok); 48 Soi 38, Th Charoen Krung; r from US\$360; 📍 **Tha Oriental**, 📍 **Saphan Taksin**; 🚗 🚕 🚲

Dating to 1876, the Oriental Hotel is one of southeast Asia's grand colonial-era hotels and one of the most luxurious and most respected in the region. The hotel's storied history of steamer travel and famous guests (see the boxed text, *above*) lives on in the original Author's Wing, a Victorian-era, gingerbread-style residence with rooms and suites dedicated to the famous writers who bedded and penned here.

The management prides itself on highly personalised service – once you've stayed here the staff will remember your name and what you like to eat for breakfast – though it's more formal and less relaxed than some younger competitors. Most of the 400 rooms are in the ageing River and Tower wings, which have contemporary Thai decorations, spacious bathrooms and river terraces. The establishment feel extends to the famed Normandie French restaurant and the bars, though you should find the sublime spa, on the Thonburi side of the river, more relaxing.

### PENINSULA HOTEL Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2861 2888; [www.bangkok.peninsula.com](http://www.bangkok.peninsula.com); 333 Th Charoen Nakhon; d from US\$330; 📍 **private ferry dock near the Oriental Hotel**; 🚗 🚕 🚲

The Peninsula is world class, with all the international accolades to prove it. The lobby is poised and polished, an Asian-esque temple of squared black marble hallways and confident power players. Being on the Thonburi side of the river, the Peninsula enjoys views of both the river and the skyline beyond. The 370 tech-filled rooms boast oversized desks and private fax numbers to go with the understated style. All of this is complemented by classic, unpretentious service, fine restaurants and one of the city's finest spas. It's hard to beat.

### SHANGRI-LA HOTEL Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2236 7777; [www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com); 89 Soi Wat Suan Phlu, Th Charoen Krung; d from US\$200, ste from US\$300; 📍 **Tha Oriental**, 📍 **Saphan Taksin**; 🚗 🚕 🚲

The Shangri-La might be 20 years old but it has aged gracefully enough that it could be said to have matured...which is a description equally at home with most of its guests. The 799 rooms are done in an understated, New Asia aesthetic that works well. Particularly so in the well-designed main wing, where the curved sides ensure everyone gets a river view (still, it's worth asking for a room close to the river). It's within the luxury sphere, yet families won't feel like bulls in a china shop. The Krung Thep wing has lower-rise terraces overlooking the river.

### MILLENNIUM HILTON

Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$\$  
☎ 0 2442 2000; [bangkok.hilton.com](http://bangkok.hilton.com); 123 Th Charoennakhon, Klongsan; d from 6000B; 📍 **private ferry from River City & Central Pier**; 🚗 🚕 🚲

After a decade as a 32-storey concrete skeleton on the far bank of the Chao Phraya, the Millennium Hilton finally opened in 2006 and now stands proudly, like a sailor in his cap, among the riverside top-end matrons. The modern Asian design creates a more stylish and less formal atmosphere than its neighbours. Flow buffet café sets the tone with fresh food and river views, The Beach makes the most of a modest-sized pool by putting the sunbeds in the water, and ThreeSixty bar fills out that sailor's cap with jazz and unrivalled views – nice. The 543 rooms aren't huge but every one has cinematic views; the executive plus suites are the pick. A private ferry connects to River City and Saphan Thaksin Skytrain.

### P&R RESIDENCE Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2639 6091-93; [pandrresidence@gmail.com](mailto:pandrresidence@gmail.com); 34 Soi 30, Th Charoen Krung, Bangrak; r 1000-1200B; 📍 **Tha Si Phraya**, 📍 **Saphan Thaksin**; 🚗 🚕 🚲

There's nothing fancy about the P&R, but its rooms are comfortable and clean and it's very fairly priced for this atmospheric old part of town. Ask for a front room, which will have views into the historic Portuguese embassy. Breakfast is 80B extra, and payment is by cash only.

### ARTISTS PLACE Map pp52–3 Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2862 0056; [www.geocities.com/theartistsplace](http://www.geocities.com/theartistsplace); 63 Soi Thiam Bunyang, off Soi Krung Thonburi 1, Th Krung Thonburi; d 350-400B; 📍 **Saphan Taksin to bus 106**

You wouldn't complain about the beds if you were staying with a friend, and this is what it's like staying with resident artist Charlee at the Artists Place in Thonburi. It's the space and the ambience you're here for, and if this is your bag then don't be surprised if you stay longer than anticipated. See the website or call for detailed directions.

### NEW ROAD GUESTHOUSE

Map pp108–9 Guesthouse \$  
☎ 0 2630 6994-98; [www.jysk-rejsebureau.dk](http://www.jysk-rejsebureau.dk); 1216/1 Th Charoen Krung, Bangrak; dm 90B, d 600-1300B, r 2500B; 📍 **Tha Si Phraya**, 📍 **Saphan Thaksin**; 🚗 🚕 🚲

In this galaxy full of hotel stars light years from Banglamphu, the New Road is a welcome surprise. Run by young Danish guys

whose names all seem to end in -sen, it has recently expanded to become the go-to budget lodging in this part of town. Rooms range from some uber simple dorms to very comfortable doubles and a four-room apartment that's ideal for families. It's a good place to meet other travellers and the JYSK office sells a load of budget-priced tours.

## SILOM

Parts of Silom are well served by the Skytrain, with Sala Daeng and Chong Nonsi stations most useful, which is a relief because traffic crawls day and night. Cars move faster along Sathon's multilane corridor. The east end of Silom is also served by the Metro at Silom station.

### DUSIT THANI Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2200 9000; [www.dusit.com](http://www.dusit.com); 946 Th Phra Ram IV, nr Th Silom; r from 6100B; 📍 **Sala Daeng**, 📍 **Silom**; 🚗 🚕 🚲

The Dusit Thani defined Bangkok glamour in the 1970s when it reigned as the city's tallest skyscraper. From the outside its distinctively '60s look remains, with balconies off every room and triangular layout. But rather than embracing this with a thoughtful retrovation, the Dusit's renovation in the global Zen style has left it with an identity crisis. Despite this, the Dusit remains a favourite among Thais and *farang* alike, and there is a palpable buzz of excitement as Thais in their finest arrive and depart for wedding banquets or conferences. It also boasts one of Bangkok's best restaurants (and killer views) in D'Sens (p161).

## top picks

### PANORAMAS

If you like to spend time in your room looking out of it, these beanpoles have guaranteed angel's-eye views in the City of Angels. Just remember to ask for a room on an upper floor.

- Millennium Hilton (opposite)
- Banyan Tree Hotel (p215)
- Peninsula Hotel (opposite)
- Dusit Thani (above)

**SOFITEL SILOM BANGKOK**Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2238 1991; [www.sofitel.com](http://www.sofitel.com); 188 Th Silom; r from 6000B; 📍 Chong Nonsi; 🚶 🚶

Coffee and liqueur colours add a spike of cool to this otherwise suburban-minded hotel. Rooms are more cosy than expansive, and the design is more safe than cutting edge. But they're clean, comfortable and everything works. Ride up to the 37th floor for a wine with a view at V9.

**TRIPLE TWO SILOM** Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2627 2222; [www.tripletwosilom.com](http://www.tripletwosilom.com); 222 Th Silom; r/ste 4500/5900B; 📍 Chong Nonsi; 🚶 🚶

How do you take a bland Bangkok shopping mall and turn it into a classy boutique? The answer lies in this four-storey, 75-room hotel in the middle of stylish Th Silom. The 2004 makeover delivered a lot of white marble, dark wood and old-timey photographs, which come together in a pleasing pan-Asian mode. Rooms are large and kitted out with both wi-fi and ADSL internet at the desk. Guests can use the roof garden, but will have to go next door to the sister Narai Hotel for the swimming pool and fitness centre.

**LA RÉSIDENCE HOTEL** Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2233 3301; [www.laresidencebangkok.com](http://www.laresidencebangkok.com); 173/8-9 Th Surawong; d/ste 2000/3700B; 📍 Chong Nonsi; 🚶 air-con 16, ordinary 93; 🚶

La Résidence is a charming boutique inn with 26 playfully and individually decorated rooms that, according to the manager, have been 'changing all the time, one at a time for the last 15 years'. They're fantastic value! Micro-mini-sized rooms start at 1200B but for 2000B, you get a more voluptuous abode with blood-red walls, modern Thai motifs and crystal-clean bathroom. The overall effect is a casual sophistication that will delight anyone who gets twitchy in chain hotels.

**LUB\*D** Map pp108–9 Hostel \$\$

☎ 0 2634 7999; [www.lubd.com](http://www.lubd.com); 4 Th Decho, Th Surawong; dm/d 550/1800B; 📍 Chong Nonsi; 🚶 🚶

From the owners of Triple Two Silom comes Lub\*D (meaning 'sleep well'), a flashpacker haunt that will no doubt be described as a 'boutique hostel' before long. Opened in 2008, the four storeys of dorms (including a ladies-only wing) and

rooms with and without bathrooms are an industrial mix of raw concrete, exposed iron beams, woodchip doors and stencilled signs. The atmosphere is young and hip, with free internet in the streetside bar-cum-lobby, and security is tight (even the dorm rooms have key cards). If you want backpacker atmosphere but fancy (and can afford) a bit of comfort, Lub\*D won't disappoint.

**ROSE HOTEL** Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2266 8268-72; [www.rosehotelbkk.com](http://www.rosehotelbkk.com); 118 Th Surawong, Silom; r from 1700B; 📍 Sala Daeng, M Silom; 🚶 🚶 🚶

Hidden down a lane beside the much larger Montien, the Rose is another Bangkok veteran that has had some much-needed cosmetic surgery. The result is more Halle Berry than Jocelyne Wildenstein, with the 70 spacious rooms sporting a stylish mix of coloured walls, dark tiles and sleek bathrooms. This Rose is a very cheap date, too, considering she comes with a small gym (three machines), sauna and Thai restaurant in an old teak house set around an oasis-like pool. With breakfast included and wi-fi for 100B an hour, it's one of the best deals in town.

**URBAN AGE** Map pp108–9 Hostel \$

☎ 0 2634 2680; [theurbanage@hotmail.com](mailto:theurbanage@hotmail.com); 130/6 Soi 8, Th Silom; dm/d 250/800B; 📍 Chong Nonsi; 🚶 🚶

The Urban Age is a sort of new age version of the classic Bangkok budget haunt, in a quiet soi within crawling distance of the Silom nightspots. Small rooms, all without bathrooms and some without windows, have just enough draped fabric and minor touches to make it more appealing than the prison-cell style competition. The friendly girls who run the place (English spoken only from 8am to 5pm) are a highlight. The only downside is that the dorms are six storeys up, all stairs.

**NIAGARA HOTEL** Map pp108–9 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2635 0676-85; 26 Soi 9, Th Silom; d from 1000B; 📍 Chong Nonsi; 🚶

From the outside, Niagara looks like another shady no-tell motel, with a well-hidden car park for midday breaks and a weather-beaten facade. The '60s-vintage lobby doesn't look much better, but the squeaky clean rooms, gleaming white bath-

rooms and friendly owner make this a good deal for the area. It seems this place takes guest entertainment seriously, too, with three channels of 24-hour pornography.

**LUMPHINI & EAST SATHON**

Access to Lumpini Park and the business and diplomatic areas of Th Sathon are the main reasons to stay in this part of Bangkok. Concentrated on Soi Ngam Duphli and Soi Sri Bamphen, the ultra-budget, pre-Khao San flophouses are popular with long-term expats – often teachers – who like the price, location near to Lumpini Metro station and the fact it's not Banglamphu.

The leafy area between the east ends of Th Sathon and Th Silom is home to several executive apartment buildings.

**BANYAN TREE HOTEL**Map p112 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2679 1200; [www.banyantree.com](http://www.banyantree.com); Thai Wah II Bldg, 21/100 Th Sathon Tai, Sathon; d from 10,500B; 📍 Lumpini; 🚶 🚶 🚶

The Banyan Tree is housed in one of Bangkok's most recognisable buildings, a sleek wafer of a skyscraper with a huge circular hole through it and a rooftop fitted out with the dreamy Moon Bar and Vertigo grill (p177). The mood is more spa than hotel, with the fragrance of gardenias and the sound of splashing water in the foyer and no less than six levels of spa facilities. Rooms are smart and views expansive. All up an excellent top-end choice, but with a few too many stairs for families with young kids.

**METROPOLITAN** Map p112 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2625 3322; [www.metropolitan.como.bz](http://www.metropolitan.como.bz); 27 Th Sathon Tai, Sathon; d from US\$290; 📍 Lumpini; 🚶 🚶 🚶

The very essence of urban cool – with the members-only Met Bar to prove it – the Metropolitan has been Bangkok's 'it' place since it was reborn from the ashes of, of all things, a YMCA. The techno-cool lobby leads to sleek modern rooms with white-on-black contrasts. But the ghost of hostels past is still apparent in the cramped and overpriced City rooms, where minimalist becomes torturous, though the bathrooms remain big enough for rock-star primping.

The suites are more humane and the two-storey suites are the ultimate in expansive expensive luxury. The two in-house restaurants, and particularly C'yan (p161), are excellent.

**SUKHOTHAI HOTEL** Map p112 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2344 8888; [www.sukhothai.com](http://www.sukhothai.com); 13/3 Th Sathon Tai; r 14,000-100,000B; 📍 Lumpini; 🚶 🚶 🚶

If you're sick of the cookie-cutter international hotels where you need to remind yourself what city you're in, stay at the Sukhothai. Architect Ed Tuttle's uniquely Thai modernism embraces both classic Thai features – think winged roofs, hardwood floors and six acres of garden full of brick stupas reminiscent of the ancient capital of Sukhothai – and a modern minimalism that is deeply satisfying. The 210 rooms carry the theme and most have views of the extensive gardens and ponds; though expect the view to suffer somewhat as the owners build a tower in 2008 and 2009. All up, very classy, with restaurants Celadon and La Scala rounding it out.

**ALL SEASONS** Map p112 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2343 6333; [www.allseasons-asia.com](http://www.allseasons-asia.com); 31 Th Sathon Tai; r 1800-2500B; 📍 Lumpini; 🚶 🚶

After a 2008 makeover hauling it into the 21st century, the All Seasons, nee King, offers 78 spacious, high-ceilinged rooms for an attractive price amid the embassies. The ambience is modern Asia, with yellow, red and green on white, and comforts include rain shower, desk with free wi-fi and cable broadband, and flat-screen TV on the wall. Superior and deluxe rooms are best; the rooftop 'exclusive' rooms are small.

**MALAYSIA HOTEL** Map p112 Hotel \$

☎ 0 2679 7127; [www.malaysiahotelbkk.com](http://www.malaysiahotelbkk.com); 54 Soi Ngam Duphli; s 738-838B, d 848-928B; 📍 Lumpini; 🚶 🚶 🚶

The Malaysia was celebrating its 36th anniversary in a sea of pink shirts (complete with singing poodles) when we dropped in, and while its glory days as Bangkok's most famous budget travellers' hotel are long gone, it remains very busy. It has a reputation as a gay pick-up scene, though the manager assured us that 'anyone is welcome, not only gays'. The 119 rooms are a good size and good value.



## THE PERILS OF ONLINE BOOKING *Karla Zimmerman*

Neon bikinis: that's odd, we thought, as our taxi drove out of the snarled traffic on Th Sukhumvit and up to our hotel. The building across the street was bursting with women clad in glowing skimp-wear. German oom-pah songs wafted through the air, and advertisements for 'bratwursts' covered menu boards at the surrounding restaurants.

Yes, we were jet-lagged, having just spent 21 hours to reach Bangkok, and it was the middle of the night, when strange things tend to happen. But bratwursts and fluorescent bikinis?

We entered the hotel lobby, where Western men and young Thai women nuzzled on all the available couches. That's when the light bulb popped over our heads, and we realised our situation: the room we'd booked on the internet – a room of 'luxurious comfort' with 'teakwood decorations and cable TV' – was located in a de facto brothel. We'd arrived at the Nana Entertainment Plaza.

A quick amble around the hotel grounds brought us to bars like Hollywood Strip (Pool! Shows! Girls! Darts!), Carnival (GoGo Girls, Girls, Girls!) and G-Spot (250 Girls Upstairs!). The latter's dancers made the neon-bikini group look practically Amish by comparison.

Despite the distraction of drinking one's beer and eating one's *phat thai* in venues where most of the patrons were getting hand jobs, we appreciated our unplanned bite of this classic slice of Bangkok. Next time, though, we'll be more careful when booking online. While a hotel that touts 'easy access, 24 hours' can't be faulted for false advertising, it's wise to remember that words have multiple meanings.

### PENGUIN HOUSE *Map p112* Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2679 9991; 27/23 Soi Sri Bamphen; r 800-900B; M Lumphini; ☺

With some rooms big enough for a ping-pong game and real furniture with a hint of décor, the Penguin is rightly popular in this area of tired old-timers. Rear rooms will be quieter, and there are a couple of interior rooms that sleep two couples. Weekly and monthly rates are also available. There's a two-night minimum stay.

### SALA THAI DAILY MANSION

*Map p112* Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2287 1436; sub-soi off Soi Sri Bamphen; s 200-500B, d 400-600B; M Lumphini

The Sala Thai looks little different than it did in its pre-Khao San salad days, but the occupants of the 15 clean, cheap, but basic, rooms (shared bathrooms) are mainly long-termers. Owner Anong (aka artist A-Za Tan) is a delight and, aside from the breezy rooftop terrace, is the main reason to stay. After-hours guests aren't welcome. Sala Thai is at the end of a lane off a sub-soi with other ultra-cheap places; look for the red-and-white signs.

### BANGKOK CHRISTIAN GUEST HOUSE

*Map p112* Guesthouse \$\$

☎ 0 2233 6303; www.bcgh.org; 123 Soi Sala Daeng 2, Th Convent; s/d/tr 1100/1500/1800B; ☺ Sala Daeng, M Silom; ☺

This Christian guesthouse is steps away from Patpong's strip clubs, proving that vice and morality are constant companions.

The rooms are institutional but adequate and family-style meals provide fellowship as well as sustenance. A small outdoor playground is available. The price includes breakfast.

## THANON SUKHUMVIT

Much of Bangkok's recent rush to build condos, offices and hotels has been played out in a sea of cranes and jackhammers along Th Sukhumvit. More than 10 new hotels have opened between 2006 and 2008, mostly falling into the style, boutique or wannabe boutique categories. So there's plenty of choice.

Sukhumvit is the newest, most cosmopolitan part of Bangkok, home to thousands of expats and hi-so Thais whose spending power supports hundreds of restaurants – Italian and Japanese being the most common. Th Sukhumvit itself is dominated by the Skytrain, which runs above it for several kilometres (and soon a few stops further) and at points creates a canyon-like sound trap that can be very noisy.

Down on the ground the street is divided into two distinct districts. West of Soi Asoke (Soi 21) is the main tourist sector where the 1960s R&R days live on in *soi* full of girlie bars. It's easy enough to avoid these, though escaping the streetside stalls flogging cheap souvenirs and fake DVDs is impossible (though the touting is more Marley than manic). Soi 11 hosts plenty of lower midrange hotels with rate sheets that often include 'joiner fees'; the *Swiss Park Hotel* (*Map pp118–19*; ☎ 0 2254 0228; 155/23 Soi

11/1, Th Sukhumvit; s/d 1800/2100B; ☺) is among the best, while one block east the '60s-era *Miami* (*Map pp118–19*; ☎ 0 2253 1266; 2 Soi 13, Th Sukhumvit; ☺ ☺) has replaced the GIs with friendly *kàthoey* (ladyboy) staff and guests collecting material for 'novels'. East of Soi Asoke, the girlie bars are replaced with residential areas, package-tour hotels and some more quirky places too.

Sukhumvit traffic is diabolical, but by using the Skytrain you can rise above most of it when heading west to the shopping areas and the riverside. The Metro connects at Asoke and is by far the easiest way to get to the northern bus station and Hualamphong train station.

### MA DU ZI *Map pp118–19* Boutique \$\$\$

☎ 0 2615 6400; www.maduzihotel.com; cnr Th Ratchadapisek & Sukhumvit Soi 16; r 15,000-33,000B; ☺ Asoke, M Sukhumvit; ☺ ☺ Ma Du Zi means 'come and see' and it seems this recently opened luxury hotel won't have any shortage of people wanting to come and stay. Ma Du Zi is a masterpiece of design, with every detail thought of and the appointments of the highest order – each of the 41 rooms has a work desk with fax/copier/printer, an espresso machine, original artwork, and a restrained but very stylish luxury in white marble, blond wood and black furniture – some even have remote-controlled bath tubs. Rooms are huge, starting at 49 sq m, and in fairness, so too are the prices and there is no pool. But they do include everything, from airport pickup through wi-fi to the minibar. The French restaurant is also excellent. Reservations only, no walk-in.

### GRAND MILLENNIUM SUKHUMVIT

*Map pp118–19* Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2204 4111; www.grandmillenniumskv.com; 30 Soi Asoke, Th Sukhumvit; r from 7500B, ste 13,500B; ☺ Asoke, M Sukhumvit; ☺ ☺ ☺ Looking like a giant glass zipper opening from the top down, the ambitious new Grand Millennium is set to shake up Bangkok's business hotel scene. Its 325 bright, spacious (minimum of 38 sq m) and tastefully furnished rooms are set around a triangular atrium fronted by acres of glass. If you don't suffer from vertigo, they're great for business, with decent-sized desks, free wi-fi and ADSL internet – there's even a putting green in the carpark. Just days before it opened in late 2007 we watched

from our apartment as the newly completed 'Millennium' sign atop the hotel was hurriedly replaced with 'Grand Millennium'. In most respects this hotel is worth the grander classification, but in the tacked-together suites you can see its more humble original ambition.

### DAVIS *Map pp118–19* Boutique \$\$\$

☎ 0 2260 8000; www.davisbangkok.net; Soi 24, Th Sukhumvit; d from 5000B; ☺ Phrom Phong, M Sirikit Centre; ☺ ☺ ☺ One of Bangkok's original 'boutique' offerings, the Davis mixes 'design rooms' in regal themes, such as a Raj's palace, a Kyoto hermitage or a Burmese plantation, with a dizzying range of large, stylish, but sometimes quite dark, spaces. Some suites boast their own sauna and orgy-sized Jacuzzi for when size (of the tub) really matters. Born for the pages of *Architectural Digest*, the detached Thai wood villas are polished to a burnished gold, with deep sleigh beds and big sunny windows arranged around a private lap pool and garden.

### SHERATON GRANDE SUKHUMVIT

*Map pp118–19* Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2649 8888; www.sheratongrandesukhumvit.com; 250 Th Sukhumvit; r from 10,000B; ☺ Asoke, M Sukhumvit; ☺ ☺ ☺ The Sheraton is a hit with corporate travellers for its 420 large (from 45 sq m) and meticulously appointed rooms, with handy details like irons, extra-large deposit boxes and big tubs as standard. The sky-high, jungle-fringed pool is an oasis and, if you have a spare 38,000B, the Thai-styled Rama suite challenges the Davis with party-sized indoor and outdoor Jacuzzis. Ask for a lake-view room.

### EUGENIA *Map pp118–19* Boutique \$\$\$

☎ 0 2259 9017; www.theeugenia.com; 267 Soi 31, Th Sukhumvit; r 5800-7200B; ☺ Prom Phong; ☺ ☺ ☺ The Eugenia is a truly unique boutique. Dreamt up by Taiwanese Indiana Jones' Eugene Yu-Cheng Yeh, the 12-room residence is modelled on the colonial mansions of Africa and the Subcontinent. Think Livingston/Hemingway/Indian Raj, with the rooms and public spaces packed full of art, books, antique furniture, beaten copper bathtubs and dead animals (we counted

zebra, warthog, crocodile, various antelope, peacock and duck). It's not, however, devoid of modern luxuries, with wi-fi internet, VoIP telephony and minibar all included in the rate. Our only criticism is that the rooms aren't huge, especially the tiny Siam suites. Ask about the airport trips in the vintage Mercedes and Jags.

**DREAM** Map pp118-19 Boutique \$\$\$  
 ☎ 0 2254 8500; [www.dreambkk.com](http://www.dreambkk.com); 10 Soi 15, Th Sukhumvit; r from US\$200; 📶 Asoke, 📺 Sukhumvit; 🚿 📺 📺

We must have looked doubtful about the blue neon glow in the bedroom, and the woman showing us around sounded like she'd seen the reaction often enough. 'The blue lights are the Dream signature,' she explained, 'we have some scientific studies that prove it makes you sleep deeper.' The blue-lit rooms are just one of the features that set Dream apart from your average boutique or design hotel. It's totally different. The 195 rooms in two buildings are a rock-star world of cream leather, mirrors, silver and blue motifs and, in the uber-chic Flava lounge bar-cum-restaurant, a white tiger (yes, blue stripes) and pink leopard. Rooms come with free wi-fi (Dream 1 only) or ADSL, coffee machines and big flat-screen TVs. At almost US\$1000, the suites are ludicrously priced for a bit more room and 'a free plate of fresh fruit'.

**S15** Map pp118-19 Boutique \$\$  
 ☎ 0 2651 2000; [www.s15hotel.com](http://www.s15hotel.com); 217 Th Sukhumvit, cnr Soi 15; d 4500-6000B, ste 7700B; 📶 Asoke, 📺 Sukhumvit; 🚿 📺

Among the better 'boutique' openings along Sukhumvit in 2007, sleek S15 has at least half an eye on the business market, with free wi-fi and a business centre and meeting room to go with the central location. The reasonably sized rooms are a mix of the browns and whites so preferred by boutique hotels, augmented with modern Asian ornaments. It works pretty well, though better value is available. If you find yourself yearning for something more grungy, the classic little restaurant on the opposite corner of Soi 15 should satisfy.

**SEVEN** Map pp52-3 Hotel \$\$  
 ☎ 081-616 2636; [www.sleepatseven.com](http://www.sleepatseven.com); 3/15 Soi 31, Th Sukhumvit, r 3100-6000B; 📺 Prom Pong; 🚿 📺

Six rooms, seven colours. This brand-new design hotel from the designers of London's Ministry of Sound comes with a boutique concept that reminds you're in Thailand. This believe each day has its own colour (eg Monday is yellow, and everyone wears a yellow shirt for the king), and each room (plus the lobby) is decorated in its own colour. The rooms are not big, but they're well appointed with free mobile phones, wi-fi and iPods. Seven will appeal to hip young singles and couples looking for design and relaxed, homey service.

**LE FENIX** Map pp52-3 Hotel \$\$  
 ☎ 0 2305 4000; [www.lefenix-sukhumvit.com](http://www.lefenix-sukhumvit.com); 33 Soi 11, Th Sukhumvit; r 2590B; 📺 Phetburi; 🚿 📺

It was inevitable the big hotel companies would co-opt the 'boutique' idea, as Accor did in 2007 with this 147-room, eight-floor place at the end of busy Soi 11. It's aimed at young, party-oriented tourists and is reasonable value. It looks contemporary enough with a lobby daubed in orange and white opening onto a 'look at me' bar. Down lounge-music-filled corridors the small rooms are, well, small. All have two single mattresses on a single base, which can be pushed apart only a few inches. To explain this design we were told 'this is a boutique hotel'...but perhaps they should add 'mainly for couples and very close acquaintances'. Service was disorganised when we visited, but should improve. Rooms have both wi-fi and broadband cable internet.

**CITICHIC** Map pp118-19 Hotel \$\$  
 ☎ 0 2342 3888; [www.citichichotel.com](http://www.citichichotel.com); 34 Soi 13, Th Sukhumvit; r from 2300B; 📶 Nana or Asoke, 📺 Sukhumvit; 🚿 📺 📺

'Small hotel, small pool...see, everything's small.' The guy showing me around was right - pretty much everything about this new midranger is *noy*, from the foyer to the 37 rooms on five floors, the gym with four machines and the 3m by 9m rooftop pool. And while the self-applied 'boutique' classification is stretching it, they have managed to squeeze a lot into the rooms; desk, broadband internet and 'chic' bathroom, some with tubs. Add in the personable service and it's a good deal.

**BANGKOK BOUTIQUE HOTEL** Boutique Hotel \$\$  
 Map pp118-19  
 ☎ 0 2261 2850; [www.bangkokboutiquehotel.com](http://www.bangkokboutiquehotel.com); 241 Soi Asoke, Th Sukhumvit; r from 2900B; 📺 Phetburi; 🚿 📺

At the north end of Soi Asoke, one of Bangkok's busiest and noisiest office-building strips, the low-rise Bangkok Boutique combines a minimalist, polished-concrete mode with hi-tech gadgetry (free wi-fi and cable broadband internet, and wireless keyboards plugged into the big flatscreen TVs so you can surf from bed) in targeting the mid-range business market. Superior rooms are the best value; ask for one away from the street. The price includes breakfast.

**NAPA PLACE BED & BREAKFAST** Hotel \$\$  
 Map pp118-19  
 ☎ 0 2661 5525; [www.napaplace.com](http://www.napaplace.com); 11/3 Yaek 2, Soi 36, Th Sukhumvit; d 2750-4800B; 📶 Thong Lo; 🚿 📺

The Napa maintains a genuinely homey B&B atmosphere despite having 12 rooms. Tucked away in a quiet *soi* off Soi 36 and seven minutes' walk to Thong Lo Skytrain, it appeals to families because it has huge rooms (36 to 67 sq m), plenty of communal space, solid security and free buffet breakfasts. Cable broadband is also free. In short, it's superb value.

**MAJESTIC SUITES** Map pp118-19 Hotel \$\$  
 ☎ 0 2656 8220; [www.majesticsuites.com](http://www.majesticsuites.com); 110-110/1 Th Sukhumvit btwn Soi 4 & Soi 6; s/d from 1400/1900B; 📶 Nana; 🚿 📺

Love-for-money is prevalent in this part of Th Sukhumvit, but Majestic's hermetically sealed rooms deliver privacy and quiet. The hotel is small and friendly and rooms facing Sukhumvit have a bird's-eye view of the street's traffic-snarled grandeur. Gym and pool facilities are available at the sister Majestic Grande, making this a central, value midranger.

**GRAND MERCURE PARK AVENUE** Hotel \$\$  
 Map pp118-19  
 ☎ 0 2262 0000; [www.grandmercure-asia.com](http://www.grandmercure-asia.com); 30 Soi 22, Th Sukhumvit; r from 2400B; 📶 Phrom Phong; 🚿 📺

A palette of cocoa and black brings a splash of global Zen to Soi 22. Not quite the Park Avenue of international repute, this large hotel does a convincing job of acting like

## THE NOSE KNOWS

Top-end and some midrange hotels have smoking and nonsmoking floors. If you've got a nose for stale cigarette smoke, which has amazing endurance in the tropics, state your preference at the time of booking.

an intimate boutique. Bathrooms are Mini-Me sized and the price includes breakfast.

**FEDERAL HOTEL** Map pp118-19 Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2253 0175; [www.federalbangkok.com](http://www.federalbangkok.com); 27 Soi 11, Th Sukhumvit; d 1000-1500B; 📶 Nana; 🚿 📺 Club Fed, as the Pattaya crowd calls it, was once an R&R stop for American GIs and remains a Soi 11 fixture more for its frangipani-lined swimming pool and time-warped coffee shop than its rooms. It's laid out like a '60s motel but you'll need to have a wide sentimental streak to really appreciate the dated furnishings and old-hotel smell. Avoid the ground-floor rooms as they occasionally flood in the rainy season. Old-timers might be comfortable in the Fed, but youngsters should look elsewhere.

**ATLANTA** Map pp118-19 Hotel \$

☎ 0 2252 6069, 0 2252 1650; fax 0 2656 8123; 78 Soi 2 (Soi Phasak), Th Sukhumvit; d from 800B; 📶 Nana, Ploenchit; 🚿 📺

The oldest hotel in the Th Sukhumvit area (and proud of it), the Atlanta enjoys cultlike status with return budget travellers who shun the Banglamphu 'tourist' scene. And rightly so. The hotel was started as the Atlanta Club in 1952 by Dr Max Henn, a former secretary to the Maharajah of Bikaner and owner of Bangkok's first international pharmacy. And while it looks thoroughly grim from outside, the perfectly preserved mid-century lobby, complete with old-fashioned writing desks and a grand-entrance staircase sweeping up five floors (there's no lift), make you want to hang around waiting for Bogart to slip in. The rooms are functional; those on the top floor aren't good at all. But the just-kempt jungle-landscaped pool is very welcome in this price bracket. Note: 'The Atlanta does not welcome sex tourists and does not try to be polite about it.'

**SUK 11** Map pp118-19 Guesthouse \$

☎ 0 2253 5927-28; [www.suk11.com](http://www.suk11.com); sub-soi off Soi 11, Th Sukhumvit; dm 250B, d 480-800B; 📶 Nana; 🚿 📺

Stepping between the potted plants and into the wooden-fronted oasis of Suk 11 is to step into Sukhumvit's primary outpost of backpacker culture, and a definite atmosphere of post-beach chill. Hidden down a small and relatively silent sub-soi off Soi 11, expect a lobby crowded with travellers from all over sitting around, drinking and swapping tales. Upstairs the 80 (yes, 80!) rooms stretch above the stores almost the length of the soi, with plank walkways and terracotta accents embellishing otherwise plain rooms with and without bathrooms. Outside is a spa, restaurant and Cheap Charlie's (p175) for the cheapest beers outside 7-Eleven.

### BANGKOK CENTRE SUKHUMVIT 25

Map pp118–19 Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2259 6869; www.thailandhotel.com; Soi 25, Th Sukhumvit; dm/s/d 390/1200/1500B; 📍 Asoke; 🚶 🚶

Opened in 2006, this HI-affiliated place looks a bit institutional but feels friendly and communal. The large, clean rooms come with cable TV, fridge and clean bathrooms – including the dorms (though they need three people for the air-con to be turned on). Prices here are for non-members, but sign up for 200B per person

and save 100/300/500B on a dorm/single/double; breakfast is included.

### HI SUKHUMVIT Map pp118–19 Hostel \$

☎ 0 2391 9338; www.hisukhumvit.com; 23 Soi 38, Th Sukhumvit; dm 300B, d 800-900B, r 1200; 📍 Thong Lo; 🚶 🚶

Seemingly lost in a galaxy where budget lodgings usually fear to go, the clean, simple dorms and rooms and welcoming family owners make this budget place a real find. The breezy rooftop is a good place to chill out, wash clothes and watch another Bangkok condo emerge from the ground, and the nearby night market is a great place to eat.

## GREATER BANGKOK

If you're staying outside central Bangkok, choose a place near the Skytrain for zippy commutes. Options in Thonburi are less accessible but more local.

### BANGKOK MARRIOTT RESORT & SPA

Map pp124–5 Hotel \$\$\$

☎ 0 2476 0022; www.marriott.com; 257 Th Charoen Nakhon, Samrae, Thonburi; r from 6000B; 🚶 hotel shuttle boat from Tha Sathon & Tha Oriental; 🚶 🚶 🚶

Set amid the lushest landscaped gardens by the river, this is the nearest thing to a resort you'll find in Bangkok. Going down-river from busy Bangkok is a mental and physical relaxant – ably abetted by the pool area and rooms. If you want to get away from it all in an international-style resort – without leaving Bangkok – this might be for you.

### REFILL NOW! Map pp124–5 Hostel \$\$

☎ 0 2713 2044; www.refillnow.co.th; 191 Soi Pridi Banhom Yong 42, Soi 71, Th Sukhumvit; dm/s/d 560/1085/1470B; 📍 Phra Kanong; 🚶 🚶 🚶

From the fertile imaginations of two young Thai architects based in California, Refill promises 'high-style low-cost'. It delivers with spotless white private rooms and dorms that have flirtatious pull screens between each double-bunk; women-only dorms are also available. Some people might balk at paying this much for shared bathrooms. But the hip-but-unpretentious vibe that emanates from the funky bar and communal areas make it well worth the money. A pool is planned for 2008. Refill Now! is near trendy Thong Lo and only 20 minutes from the airport. To get there, take a taxi or moto taxi from the Skytrain down Soi 71, turn right on Soi 42 and left; or come by *khlong* taxi and walk.

### REFLECTIONS ROOMS Map pp124–5 Hotel \$\$

☎ 0 2270 3344; www.reflections-thai.com; 224/2-18 Th Pradipat btwn Sois 18 & 20; r 1850-3450B; 📍 Saphan Kwai; 🚶 🚶

A room bedecked entirely in black-and-white spiral psychedelia; another sporting portraits of playful puffed-up ladies; and another decorated completely in recycled goods. These are just three of the 39 rooms at Reflections Rooms, each styled by a different artist, designer or celebrity, and probably the most arty, trippy, kitschy and totally cool hotel in Thailand. Recently moved north to Th Pradipat, a 10-minute walk from Saphan Kwai Skytrain, Reflections has been thoroughly revitalised. The rooms are still Starbucks-sized: small is really big and large is mega, each also fitted with DVD player and free wi-fi. Check out the rooms online to book the one you want; front rooms are noisy.

### THAI HOUSE

Guesthouse \$\$

☎ 0 2903 9611; www.thaihouse.co.th; 32/4 Mu 8, Tambon Bang Meuang, Bang Yai, Nonthaburi; s/d 1400B/1600B

For an experience of traditional Thai life, surrounded by fruit trees and river music and feeling far from Bangkok's urban snarl, it's hard to beat the Thai House. The teak home built with wing-shaped roofs is pure, old-fashioned Siam, with a welcome as warm as you could hope for. Rates include breakfast, and many guests choose to do the cooking courses taught on the premises. By river, take a public boat from Tha Chang to Bang Yai in Nonthaburi, via Khlong Bangkok Noi. Once you reach the public pier in Bang Yai, charter a boat to Thai House's own pier – all the boat pilots know it. By taxi, get the driver to call for directions.

## AIRPORT ACCOMMODATION

Most people will use the new Suvarnabhumi International Airport, which takes all international flights, but old Don Muang airport still hosts some domestic services. See p251 for transport details.

### Suvarnabhumi International Airport

Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel (☎ 0 2131 1111; www.novotel.com; r from 5000B; 🚶 🚶) Boasts 600-plus luxurious rooms in the airport.

Grand Inn Come Hotel (☎ 0 2738 8189; www.grandinncome-hotel.com; 99 Moo 6, Th Kingkaew, Bangplee; s/tw from 1800/2000B; 🚶 🚶) Solid midranger 10km from the airport; airport shuttle; 'lively' karaoke bar.

Refill Now! (see opposite) Nearest good budget option.

### Don Muang Airport

Amari Airport Hotel (Map pp124–5; ☎ 0 2566 1020; www.amari.com; 333 Th Choet Wutthakat; r from US\$90; 🚶 🚶) Opposite Don Muang, most popular airport hotel and has well-equipped day-use rooms from US\$85.

Rama Gardens Hotel (Map pp124–5; ☎ 0 2561 0022; www.ramagardenshotel.com; 9/9 Th Vibhavadi Rangsit; r from 4700B; 🚶 🚶) Tranquil garden setting and very comfortable deluxe wings with deep-soak tubs. Shuttle buses to airport.

We-Train International House (Map pp124–5; ☎ 0 2967 8550-54; www.we-train.co.th; 501/1 Muu 3, Th Dechabungkhua, Sikan, Don Muang; dm 200B, r 800-1100B; 🚶 🚶) Quiet place with good-value rooms 3km from airport. Run by the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women. Take a taxi (about 80B) from outside Amari Hotel.

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