

About Pattaya and Jomtien

Pattaya is Thailand's largest resort town and is a modern and ever-expanding city. Its location only two hours from Bangkok on the eastern seaboard makes it a popular holiday destination for both foreign and Thai visitors. Pattaya's coastal position in central Thailand means it experiences no real extremes of heat or cold, making it an all-year-round destination.

Over a third of the 12 million foreign visitors to Thailand come to Pattaya, some for a day or two, and some for several weeks. There is a large ex-pat community who come from all over the world, while Thais, particularly Bangkok residents with second homes here, visit frequently. International conferences and sports competitions also feature highly in the day-to-day life of the city.

Pattaya Beach, a long but narrow crescent beach, is a central feature of the city, with a promenade running its length and the main locus of activity is centered among the lanes that run from here into the city's main street — Sukhumvit road. Modern hotels compete with restaurants, shops, bars and mobile food stalls for space in this busy city, while the congested traffic rivals Bangkok for its speed, diversity and danger. One kilometer to the south, Jomtien provides a long clean beach backed by modern hotels and condos, while to the north smaller beaches and a quieter atmosphere prevails in the exclusive suburb of Naklua.

However this city of multi-cultural visitors remains quintessentially Thai, and although the convenience foods of the West are readily accessible, the Thai culture is everywhere and most visitors embrace the easy-going way of life readily. Over 99 per cent of people who live and work here are Thai and even a couple of blocks away from the beach the local culture takes over from the holiday atmosphere by the sea. Despite this, the ex-pat community here is a perhaps the least assimilated of all the foreign communities in Thailand, and you're more likely to feel like you're in Tenerife than Thailand, with all the footie on TV, English style pubs and nary a word of Thai spoken in the many bars that service the full-time early retirees who favor this atmosphere.

Pattaya offers a wide range of activities, sports and pastimes to please all tastes and pockets, ranging from diving with the well know Mermaid's Dive Center and golf to swimming and shopping, relaxing on the beach to bungee jumping, motor sports to real Thai massage and spas. The nightlife is legendary, with several thousand bars, restaurants, like The Captain's Corner's "Eat all you can nightly buffet, clubs and go go bars to choose from, all located conveniently within a large area. It has large areas solely set aside for go go bars and the rules are some of the most relaxed of all in the Kingdom.

The city itself was the first Thai resort to gain popularity with international visitors when it filled up with American GIs who were sent here for R&R during the Vietnam war, disembarking by boat or at the busy U-Tapao airfield near Sattahip to the south. As a result, the city soon gained notoriety for its prostitutes and to this day attracts plenty of young women (many from the poor Isaan region) to earn a living here, entertaining lonely visiting men. As a result, some areas of the city are rather overwhelming in this respect, but it is one of the city's chief attractions for some.

Rather than seeing itself as sleazy, Pattaya prefers to be recognized as a vibrant and fun break from Bangkok with a good tourist infrastructure, plenty of entertainment options, a healthy trade in budget package tourism and a thriving property market buoyed by the massive industrial development (with foreign input) that is occurring on this part of the eastern seaboard. Pattaya has its naughty districts, but it's all fairly safe and harmless, and the city still manages to pass off as a family destination, boasting amusement and water parks, nice beaches and plenty of shopping and weekend seaside pads for "cooped up" Bangkokians.

The main tourist season in Pattaya is between November and March when the weather is pleasantly hot and dry (low 30s Celsius in the day and 20s at night). April/June can get very hot and the rainy season usually lasts from July to October although it usually only rains for an hour at a time. Pattaya activities

The city of Pattaya has a wide variety of activities to suit all ages and preferences.

Here in Pattaya the activities on offer include: para-sailing, jet skiing, bungee-jumping, elephant back riding, deep-sea, shore and freshwater fishing, scuba diving, sailing, swimming in the pool or the sea, golf, motor racing, polo, gyms and fitness training, shopping, cycling, bowling, running, tennis, snooker, shooting, archery, cooking courses, yoga, kick boxing, tai chi, meditation, beauty and relaxation spas, tropical gardens and just walking by the sea. Adventure activities

Pattaya, being a tourist resort by the sea, offers an exciting selection of unique and fun activities which can be arranged either through one of the many tour agents scattered around the city or often through your hotel or condo. Jet skis can be hired directly from most beaches in Pattaya for around 1000 baht per hour and fast speedboats can be hired by the hour or day for 1500 to 5000 baht. Para-sailing takes place offshore, depending upon wind and sea conditions, throughout the year, with pick up boats from the New Pier at the end of Walking Street or from the Pattaya beach.

Pattaya is also one of the oldest diving centers in this part of Asia. It has a year-round diving season with good visibility, and a sea temperature of around 28C which means that there is a rich variety of marine life and coral. Most of the diving

companies have offices along the waterfront and in Walking Street. More on <http://www.mermaiddiver.com>

Pattaya City is clogged with small motorbikes but you can hire a Harley-Davidson, a big Honda or a similarly powered machine in several places along Beach Road, Sois 2, 8 and 13/1 and on Sukhumvit. Some of them go very fast and the laws and local traffic should be seriously noted. Many companies restrict the use of these bikes to 50kms per day and do make sure the insurance is in order. A big bike will cost you around 1500/2000 baht a day unless you bargain. Golf and tennis and outdoor activities

Pattaya is a golfer's paradise with over 20 international-standard courses within very easy reach. Many people come from all over the world to Pattaya just to play golf on top quality courses for a fraction of the cost at home. Tournaments, both domestic and International, are played at various courses. Green fees start at 300 baht in low season, but the best courses will charge 1000 to 2000 baht, caddies cost 250 baht, golf cart fees are 500 baht Indoor pursuits

Indoor bowling is very popular with both locals and tourists with several alleys to choose from around the city, the one above Tops Supermarket on the corner of 2nd Road and Central Pattaya Road is a favorite with both locals and tourists. Snooker halls in Pattaya are everywhere, as are pool and billiard bars. There are also a pistol shooting gallery, clay shooting range and archery range. Theatres, cinema, festivals and live music for all tastes are listed in the local community magazines and newspapers.