

Formerly known to the world as Siam, Thailand bears the distinction of being the singular country in Southeast Asia not to be conquered by European colonial forces. As such, it is peopled by groups of fierce but friendly folk who would just as easily give you the clothes off their back as they will knocking you flat on it if you get out of line. So, in essence, Thailand is full of Black women. Which, in turn, makes it the perfect place for melanated female travelers to explore—with or without a crew.

But with such a vast and varied culture and terrain, knowing where to start your journey can be more than a little overwhelming—even for the baddest of them all. So, here is a guide to traveling through Thailand for all those who dare enter the Kingdom.

## Bangkok

More likely than not, when you land in the Tiger Kingdom, you'll be heading first to Bangkok. And for good reason. Not only is that where the main airports are, but as Bangkok is the biggest and most populous city in Thailand, it serves as the center of everything—culture, commerce, and, of course, travel. And despite its international reputation as a cacophonous, traffic filled mess of the city, in many ways, that is also what makes it great.

Any city can be intimidating. First time visitors to cities like New York and Tokyo all report being awed, yet, overwhelmed by their new surroundings. But even they have levels of infrastructure that make them far easier to navigate than Bangkok. But never fret. There is a way to traverse the city with relative ease--on the BTS or Bangkok Transit System.

If you want a successful trip to Bangkok, it is essential that you choose accommodations that are within walking distance to the BTS. One of the largest drawbacks of Bangkok is the debilitating traffic. And there is no better way to ruin a trip than to sit in gridlock in 106-degree heat. But if you stick to the BTS, you'll be cruising the city in air-conditioning and style.

Now that you know how to traverse the city, let's look at where to go.

## The Grand Palace

If you need not know, Thailand still has a monarchy. In fact, the ancestor of the current King was the inspiration for the classic film the "King and I." While the family no longer resides at the residence, it is still a sight to behold.

But here is an insider tip: pay for the guide to take you around. They generally hang out just outside the grounds and for \$20 or 600 baht, they will steer you around the four courts for an hour and a half. And while the price may seem a bit steep for Thai standards, it was well worth it. The information that your guide will impart on you is invaluable. And often they are skilled

Instagram boyfriends as well. Meaning that they will take great photos of you for posterity. Just be sure to dress modestly, otherwise the other Thai people will read you for filth.

## Night Market

The cities of Asia are world renown for their markets, but in all honesty, Bangkok truly has them all beat. There are two main types that you must visit: the Night and Floating Markets. As the sun goes down on the city, huge tents full of stalls and stands go up. Serving everything from silk to fried silkworms to embroidered handbags and shoes.

For an “authentic” experience, visit Rot Fai Market, Srinakarin. As one of the largest markets, you’ll be able to find everything you want and don’t need to take back with you. You’ll also find the cheapest and best eats of anywhere in Thailand.

## Floating Market

Perhaps one of the most iconic cultural offerings is the floating market. Located all along the outskirts of the capital city, this bizarre bazaar is a must see for anyone visiting Siam. All along the canals, instead of stalls selling wares, there are small boats packed high with fruit. Or in other boats you will find women whipping up simple dishes, usually Pad Thai from their throngs of hungry customers.

While there, be sure to take a boat tour through the canals. The price should be no more than 100 baht for an hour-long trip. You’ll be guided through the backwaters and see a side of Thailand that you otherwise wouldn’t have access to.

## The Beach(es)

No trip to Thailand can be complete without a stint on the beach. And outside of the Caribbean, Southeast Asia boasts some of the best beaches in the world. But with the plethora of options, it could be difficult to choose. But luckily for you, there really are no bad choices. But as a Black solo female traveler, there are locales that may be more appropriate than others. So here are some things to consider:

### Phuket

As one of the most popular vacation locales in the world, Phuket’s reputation as a central party destination is legendary—if a bit overstated. While there are plenty of places to go for the perfect nights out on the town, there are also plenty of other quieter destinations if you need a bit of respite.

### Phi Phi Islands

In equal parts gorgeous and bombastic, this is the place to go if you want to experience glorious sun risings and crazy parties at night. This is not the place to go to if you are looking for a calm place to meditate. Spend a night or two here, and then, if you want more than a few nights sleep on your trip, move on.

## Krabi

Located across the bay from Phuket Island, Krabi is the place to go for all those who would never travel to a place as overdeveloped and touristy as Phuket. If you want little more out of your stay than a bungalow and a beautiful shoreline.

## The North

While the beaches of Thailand are surely not to be missed, the spaces away from the beach also deserve a bit of attention as well. Due to the geography of the country, the north and center of the country are landlocked, while the coastline extends along the southern borders of the country. But before you take off back home, there are three cities in the north that should be included in your itinerary.

## Chiang Rai

Located in the northernmost province of the same name, Chiang Rai is famous for Wat Rong Khun or the white temple. This intricately decorated temple is one of the most incredible in a land full of amazing temples. You can spend a few days here, but you can easily take a day trip from the largest city in Northern Thailand—Chiang Mai.

## Chiang Mai

The cultural hub of the north, this city is a hotspot for expats—particularly for those of African descent. Spend a few days here walking around the old city or shopping at the night market. This slower paced, yet, equally rich region is a great balance between the chaos of Bangkok and the calm of the beach. It is a great way to end your time in Thailand. But before you do, be sure to hit up one more city.

## Pai

Of all the spaces of main tourist destinations in Thailand, Pai is possibly the most traditional. This picture-perfect riverside town is a great place to spend a few days—especially for a solo traveler. You can walk around, take pictures in the clouds, meditate and just slow down. It is very necessary for anyone, but especially a Black woman, who needs to recharge before heading back into the world.

So, that is it! All the reasons should go and things you should experience if you ever decide to head to Thailand. And take our word for it, from the food, to the beaches, to the friendliness of the people, it will be a journey that you won't soon forget!