

The Wonderer

CURATED TRAVELS FOR INSPIRED LIVING

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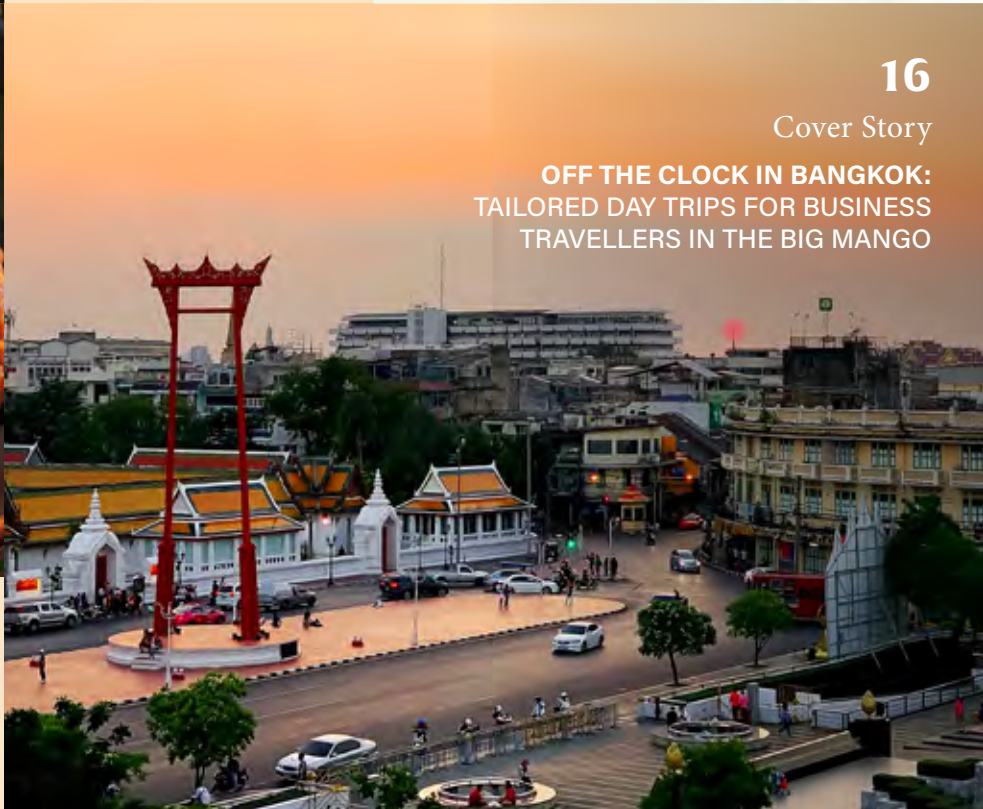
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Editor's Letter

Dear Wonderers,

Welcome to the second edition of **The Wonderer**, your guide to curated travels for inspired living. Uncover rewarding travel experiences, be it an escape from the city or a slower break between meetings on a business trip.

Our cover story (p.g. 16) explores **Bangkok** through the eyes of the busy business traveller, offering curated one-day itineraries that take you beyond the boardroom and into the city's lesser-known cultural, culinary, and creative enclaves. Think floating markets, artist-run galleries, and late-night Chinatown feasts, all within a single day's reach.

For those setting their sights farther afield, we head to **Koh Samui** (p.g. 8) for an insider's guide to the island's most meaningful experiences. From eco-forward elephant sanctuaries and secret sculpture gardens to zipline adventures and historic fishing villages, this is Samui well beyond the beach.

In our **Local Pulses** interview series (p.g. 26), hospitality insiders from Bangkok and Pattaya offer personal takes on what makes their neighbourhoods special. Inside you will hear about everything from hidden green spaces and street food gems in the capital to coastal wellness rituals that draw on Thai traditions of scent, balance, and everyday gratitude.

Ready to expand your breakfast horizons beyond toast and coffee? On page 12, our **Feast & Find** feature redefines breakfast with five regional Asian dishes, from a comforting Penang Hokkien mee to a spicy Sri Lankan spread. These flavourful, historically rich meals are the perfect fuel for your day.

And if you're planning a trip to **Colombo**, we break down the city's unique transport scene (p.g. 4), where the journey is as much a part of the experience as the destination. With tuk-tuks, rental cars, and ride-hailing apps to navigate, our guide will help you move confidently through the Sri Lankan capital's organised chaos.

Finally, take a visual pause with our photo essay from **Café Claire** (p.g. 30), a serene Parisian-inspired bistro tucked along Bangkok's historic Wireless Road. Here, elegance and ease meet in every corner and croissant.

Wherever your travels take you next, we hope this issue helps guide the way. We wish you a trip filled with curiosity, comfort, and a few pleasant surprises along the road.

The Wonderer Editorial Team

The Wonderer

CURATED TRAVELS FOR INSPIRED LIVING



WHEELS IN MOTION IN COLOMBO

From the lively chaos of tuk-tuks to the convenience of ride-hailing, here's how to get around Sri Lanka's capital with ease

With its colonial architecture, buzzing markets, and oceanfront promenades, Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, offers a heady blend of past and present. And while specific sites and landmarks offer the main destinations for travelers to work towards, it's often the act of simply moving through the city that can deliver some of the most vivid impressions. Whether by tuk-tuk, rickety bus, or a ride hailing apps, getting around Colombo is an adventure in itself, though it might take a little deciphering for first-timers.

When most folks arrive here for the first time, they expect a tidy transport network, only to find themselves navigating a far more complex and deeply informal system. The city lacks a metro or train network for urban travel, although there is currently a proposal to build one as part of ongoing urban revitalization efforts. Instead, mobility revolves around three primary modes: tuk-tuks, public buses, and increasingly, ride-hailing apps like PickMe and Uber.

Each option brings its own logic—and its own set of trade-offs. Tuk-tuks offer agility and charm but, just like Thailand, require negotiating that can often become tiresome for many visitors. Buses provide a window into everyday Sri Lankan life at an unbeatable price, albeit with a steep learning curve and often a dash of chaos. Meanwhile, ride-hailing apps promise convenience and transparency, especially for non-Sinhala speakers, and will likely be the day-to-day option for most.

Colombo is a dynamic city, continually growing and embracing new technologies. While it navigates its evolution, the varied transport options ensure there's a unique and fitting way for everyone to travel. But understanding how these systems work—and when to use each—can turn a potentially bewildering experience into one of Colombo's unexpected joys. Here's how to make sense of the city's transport landscape.



RIDE-HAILING APPS

The high-tech shortcut with a touch of comfort

Much like in Bangkok, ride-hailing apps have transformed the way people navigate Colombo. They offer speed, convenience, and comfort in a city where public transport can be unpredictable and messy. If you're looking for a smoother, more curated travel experience, these platforms are going to be your go-to option for getting around and, most importantly, getting to where you actually want to go.

PickMe, Sri Lanka's homegrown answer to Uber, launched in 2015 and has since become ubiquitous throughout the country. Both it and Uber operate widely across Colombo and its suburbs, with options tailored to different budgets and travel styles. While tuk-tuks and compact sedans remain the most commonly booked vehicles overall, both apps also offer premium ride options that cater to travellers looking for a higher level of service.

PickMe's "Flash" and "Sedan" categories are popular for their air-conditioned comfort, but those seeking an even more comfortable experience can opt for PickMe XL (for groups or just some added space) or

PickMe Luxury, a tier that includes well-maintained higher-end vehicles. Uber, too, offers Uber Premier or UberXL, depending on availability, with larger, more comfortable cars, which is great for business travellers or those carrying extra luggage. Although these are the premium options, they still remain pretty affordable overall. A 6-8 km ride in a premium car might run LKR 900–1,200 (around THB 108–144 or USD 3–4) with prices climbing slightly during peak hours.

Many people are familiar with Uber already, but PickMe has the same features that you would come to expect as well. The fare is shown upfront, and you can track the journey in real time. Payment options are usually flexible, cash is always possible, Uber accepts most foreign credit cards, but it should be noted that PickMe can be hit or miss with international cards.

For those who value comfort, safety, and control, ride-hailing apps offer an elevated way to explore Colombo. You'll avoid haggling, reduce miscommunication, and enjoy door-to-door service—whether it's a quick trip to dinner or a breezy transfer to your hotel in an air-conditioned sedan.



TUK-TUKS

The ubiquitous, unofficial symbol of Colombo

In Colombo, tuk-tuks are more than just a means of transport, they're a cultural touchpoint. Much like the versions you'll see in Bangkok, they come painted in vivid colors and often adorned with flashing lights or devotional charms. They're quick, maneuverable, and omnipresent, darting between buses and cars in ways that defy traffic logic.

Hailing one is as simple as raising your hand, but settling on a price is another matter. While Colombo's Western Province legally requires meters, enforcement remains patchy. Tourists, in particular, are often quoted inflated flat rates. Apps like PickMe and Uber offer a reliable alternative, bringing metered pricing, GPS tracking, and accountability into

the mix. For those new to the city, using an app-based tuk-tuk is the easiest way to avoid haggling and the risk of overpayment, but we have more on that below.

Pricing is typically affordable: LKR 100 (around THB 12 or USD 0.33) for the first kilometre and Rs.100 for every kilometre you travel outside of that. That means a 5 km journey costs around LKR 500 (around THB 60 or USD 2), but that is if you are paying local rates. Drivers often quote higher flat fares to foreigners—sometimes LKR 1,000–1,500 (around THB 120–180 or USD 3–5). Although a traveller's tolerance for negotiation is very personal, a bit of bargaining is both expected and effective in terms of bringing the price down.

Beyond the fare, tuk-tuks offer a sensory dive into Colombo's rhythm. Drivers may chat about cricket or traffic, while the open sides expose you to the sights, smells, and sounds of the city. If you've used a tuk-tuk in Thailand, you'll know that a bit of caution is advised. Drivers are often aggressive and opportunistic, darting through openings quickly. It's best to hold onto handrails throughout the ride to help keep you steady through sharp turns or sudden lane changes.

Despite its quirks, a tuk-tuk ride remains a defining part of the Colombo experience, and you should at least try the experience once, even if you eventually move on to other means of transport later.



RENTAL CARS

Explore Colombo at your own pace

For independent exploration, rental cars offer an exceptional way to discover Colombo, and Sri Lanka. With reputable agencies available, securing a vehicle is straightforward, granting you the freedom to craft your own itinerary and explore beyond the city. Enjoy cruising along scenic coastal roads or venturing into the picturesque countryside from the comfort of a private, air-conditioned car.

While Colombo's city traffic can be lively, main roads and expressways offer smooth journeys, and a GPS will be your trusted companion. Remember to obtain the necessary Sri Lankan recognition permit for your international driving licence beforehand.

Car rental options in Colombo include both global and local companies, with rates starting from LKR 14,500 (THB 1,420 or USD 40) per day, and compact cars available from LKR 7,300 (THB 710 or USD 20). Most agencies require a passport, visa, credit card, and a minimum age of 21.

The Sri Lankan Recognition Permit, issued by the Automobile Association of Ceylon for about LKR 4,400 (THB 430 or USD 12), is required alongside your international licence. Many rental providers can help arrange it.

Before setting off, check for pre-existing damage, confirm insurance and fuel terms, and ensure your route is covered. Renting a car is a flexible, comfortable way to explore the island at your own pace.

Ultimately, navigating Colombo presents a delightful array of choices. Whether you opt for the energetic charm of a tuk-tuk, the modern convenience of ride-hailing apps, or the freedom afforded by a rental car, each mode offers a unique perspective on this captivating city. Embrace the journey and discover the best way to move with the rhythm of Colombo. ■



➤ Amari Colombo ◀

City Adventures Meet Coastal Elegance

Perched along Galle Road with panoramic views of both the Indian Ocean and Colombo's skyline, Amari Colombo offers a polished and comfortable stay in the heart of the city. This five-star property features 167 thoughtfully designed rooms and suites, many with unobstructed sea views and modern amenities.

Dining options include Ahāra (Asian fusion), Prego (Italian), and the exquisite Mira Lounge, blending Sri Lankan heritage with Thai and French influences. Enjoy the rooftop infinity pool and Club Pahana lounge for sublime ocean vistas.

With impeccable service, modern meeting spaces, and convenient airport transfers, Amari Colombo stands as the ideal base for discerning travellers—balancing cosmopolitan energy with coastal calm in one elegant stroke.

Explore more: www.amari.com/colombo



MORE THAN SAND AND SEA

An Insider's Guide to Koh Samui

Koh Samui is undoubtedly one of Thailand's most beloved destinations (especially with all the White Lotus hype in 2025), attracting visitors from around the world for its combination of soothing natural surroundings and huge range of experiences. Set in the tranquil Gulf of Thailand, the island is easily accessible via its own international airport and several ferry services from the mainland. It can be visited year-round, December through May is characterised by minimal rainfall, providing exceptionally pleasant conditions. However, the

rest of the year offers its own charm, often with lush landscapes and a more local feel. Beyond its ease of access, what sets Koh Samui apart is its diverse appeal—whether you are seeking a wellness retreat, vibrant nightlife, or cultural exploration, the island offers a little something for everyone.

Here, we round up some of the best experiences to be had on the island, from hidden gems to well-known landmarks. Whether it is your first time or a return visit, the island always has something new to offer.





Fisherman's Village ▼



FOR A CONNECTION WITH NATURE

Samui Elephant Kingdom Sanctuary

Recognised as one of the country's premier ethical sanctuaries, Samui Elephant Kingdom Sanctuary allows visitors to respectfully observe elephants living in harmony with their human caretakers. The animals are cared for in a natural environment, free to roam a vast garden and jungle landscape and interact at their own pace. From the Skywalk, you can watch them forage and socialise from a safe distance, helping to minimise human impact but also allowing guests to watch the creatures from (somewhat) up close.

Established in 2019, the sanctuary adheres strictly to the "Five Freedoms" of animal welfare: freedom from hunger and thirst; discomfort; pain, injury, or disease; freedom to express natural behaviour; and freedom from fear and distress. The aim is to address past wrongs and serve as a model for other sanctuaries in Thailand and beyond. If you are looking to get a glimpse of Thailand's national animal up close but without causing harm or impact, this is as good a bet as you can make.

FOR A LOCAL EXPERIENCE

Fisherman's Village

With roots dating back around 1,500 years, Fisherman's Village in Bophut was once a self-sufficient fishing community. Today, it retains much of its historic charm, with preserved wooden shophouses, narrow alleyways, and colonial facades now home to boutique shops, cafés, and beachside restaurants.

The village is best known for its Friday night walking street market, where local vendors sell street food, handicrafts, and souvenirs amid live music and a festive atmosphere. Along the beachfront, venues like Coco Tam's offer relaxed dining and evening fire shows, making it a popular sunset destination. For visitors seeking both culture and casual seaside appeal, this area remains one of Samui's most characterful spots.



▲ Tarnim Magic Garden

FOR AN ADVENTURE

Tree Bridge Zipline

Tree Bridge Zipline delivers an adrenaline-filled ride through Koh Samui's lush rainforest, soaring across eight cables that stretch over 1,200 metres. The route takes you soaring across the thick foliage and towering trees that enshroud much of the island, but there is also some visibility of the nearby ocean on certain lines, creating a very well rounded viewing experience as you glide from line to line. The treetop cafe—a rustic wooden platform perched about 20 metres high—offers similar, sweeping views. Whether you're plunging through forest corridors, pausing by a waterfall pool, or sipping coffee among the treetops, the backdrop is consistently stunning. You can expect the experience to take about an hour from start to finish.

FOR GOOD FORTUNE AND PEACE OF MIND

Big Buddha Temple (Wat Phra Yai) & Wat Plai Laem

Wat Phra Yai, also known as the "Big Buddha Temple," is located on a small island linked to Koh Samui through a thin strip of land. Its centrepiece is a 12-metre-tall golden Buddha statue, making it both a place of worship and a serene setting for meditation. Shops at the entrance sell religious and cultural items that you can pick up on your visit.

Just a few minutes away from the Big Buddha Temple is Wat Plai Laem, which is found on the mainland and home to a striking 18-armed image of Guanyin, an important deity in many Southeast and East Asian religions, and a large statue of a smiling Buddha. All of these statues are made in a Chinese-inspired style that is slightly different from what you might expect at other temples around the country. Though constructed in 2004, the temple reflects the enduring Chinese cultural influence in Koh Samui and Thailand more broadly.

As with all sacred sites, visitors should dress modestly and respectfully.

FOR THE ART LOVERS

Tarnim Magic Garden

Also known as the Secret Buddha Garden, this hidden space was created in 1976 by Nim Thongsuk, a prominent fruit farmer. After retiring, he designed the garden to reflect his vision of heaven, filling it with sculptures inspired by Buddhist folklore, Thai mythological creatures, animals, and even a statue of himself—nestled among trees and waterfalls. Now partially covered in moss, the garden feels mystical and serene, like something out of a fairytale.

Located on a hilltop, a visit to the Tarnim Magic Garden requires an uphill drive, so you'll likely be taking a cab or tour guide. Also, the paths and stairways can be slippery, so you should bring some sturdy shoes with plenty of grip.

Chaweng Beach ▼



FOR DAY-TO-NIGHT ENERGY

Chaweng Beach and Lamai Beach

For those seeking livelier surroundings and a bit of nightlife action, Chaweng and Lamai are the island's most popular beaches, each offering a distinct atmosphere.

Chaweng Beach is the busiest, known for its long stretch of white sand and abundance of activities. Visitors can swim in clear waters, lounge on soft sand, rent kayaks or paddle boards, shop at local stores, and dine at everything from street stalls to restaurants. After sunset, the area transforms into a bustling nightlife hub.

Lamai Beach, while slightly more subdued, is still active. It offers ample spots for sunbathing, beachfront dining, and casual bars. With wellness options and a friendly, local feel, Lamai provides a more relaxed alternative. ■



➤ Amari Koh Samui ◀

A 5-Star Blend of Elegance and Comfort

Designed for a sophisticated comfort, Amari Koh Samui features spacious rooms and suites, alongside a fitness centre, three swimming pools, various culinary offerings such as the original Prego Italian Restaurant; beachfront Amaya Bar; and more, Breeze Spa, Kids Club, and a dive centre. Located on a quieter stretch of Chaweng Beach, the property combines tranquillity with convenience.

Accommodation options cater to every guest, ranging from Superior Garden View and Junior Suite Ocean View to more expansive choices like the Deluxe Family and Two Bedroom Family Suite Beach Wing. With its central location and full range of facilities, the resort ensures a relaxing and enjoyable stay for all.

Explore more: www.amari.com/koh-samui



➤ OZO Chaweng Samui ◀

A Fun Beachfront Space for Everyone

OZO Chaweng Samui is designed for a truly enjoyable stay. Centrally located on Chaweng Beach, it caters to fun-loving travellers of all ages with beachfront rooms, ocean-view options, family suites, and vibrant social spaces including restaurants like "New American" comfort food specialist STACKED Burger, Beach Bar for sunny snacks and drinks, THIRST pool bar, and breakfast buffet champion EAT. Add to all this a sleek and spacious swimming pool and state-of-the-art gym and you have a recipe for a great stay.

Major attractions such as Wat Plai Laem, Fisherman's Village, and the walking street are easily accessible. After a day out, guests can return to refresh and recharge in comfort.

Explore more: www.ozohotels.com/chaweng-samui



*Sri Lankan
hoppers*

Ⓕ

5 ASIAN BREAKFASTS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED

Tired of toast?
These five
flavour-packed
Asian breakfasts
will make you
rethink your
morning routine

Fed up with the same old toast and a cuppa? Asia's brimming with a dazzling array of breakfast options that are not only scrumptious but also deeply rooted in culture and tradition. Forget what you think you know about breakfast and dive into a world of flavours with these five cracking morning meals from across the continent.



Penang Hokkien Mee

1. PENANG HOKKIEN MEE: A BURST OF PRAWNY GOODNESS

Also known as Prawn Noodles, Hokkien Mee is a celebrated breakfast speciality from Penang, Malaysia. This flavourful dish features springy yellow noodles or rice vermicelli in a rich and spicy prawn-based broth. It's typically adorned with essential toppings like succulent prawns, slices of hard-boiled egg, crisp bean sprouts, and blanched kangkung (water spinach), all finished with a sprinkle of aromatic fried shallots for an extra layer of texture and taste. Its hearty and invigorating profile makes it a popular and satisfying way to start the day for many in Penang.

Where to try it: Club Tiffin, Amari SPICE Penang

2. THAI FISH CONGEE: THE ULTIMATE SOOTHING BOWL

For those after a lighter yet equally satisfying option, look no further than Thai fish congee. This creamy rice porridge, often simmered until the grains break down into a comforting consistency, is a testament to the soothing power of simplicity. Typically served with delicate flakes of steamed or poached fish, ginger, spring onions, and a dash of white pepper, it's a gentle and nourishing breakfast that's perfect for easing into the day, leaving you feeling revitalised without being heavy.

Where to try it: Club Napha, Amari Pattaya

Laotian
Pho



3. LAOTIAN PHO NOODLES: A VIENTIANE MORNING RITUAL

While often associated with Vietnam, Pho holds a special place in Laotian cuisine, particularly in Vientiane. Laotian Pho for breakfast is a deeply aromatic and flavourful experience. The broth, simmered for hours with a blend of spices, forms the soul of the dish, cradling tender slices of beef or chicken, rice noodles, and a generous scattering of fresh herbs like basil, mint, and coriander. It's a vibrant and invigorating breakfast that awakens the senses, offering a complex interplay of savoury, sweet, and herbaceous notes.

Where to try it: Amaya Food Gallery, Amari Vientiane

4. SRI LANKAN BREAKFAST: A SPICY AND FLAVOURFUL AWAKENING

Prepare your taste buds for an explosion of flavour with a traditional Sri Lankan breakfast. This isn't your typical continental spread; instead, it often features a rich **chicken curry** and a comforting **dhal** (lentil curry), served with an assortment of breads like **hoppers** (bowl-shaped pancakes made from fermented rice batter) or **string hoppers** (steamed rice noodles pressed into delicate nests). The combination of spices, the tender chicken, and the creamy lentils creates a truly unforgettable morning meal that is both hearty and incredibly satisfying, proving that breakfast can be bold and exciting.

Where to try it: Ahāra All-Day Dining, Amari Colombo

5. NASI LEMAK (MALAYSIA/JOHOR BAHRU): THE QUINTESSENTIAL MALAYSIAN BREAKFAST

You simply cannot talk about Malaysian breakfast without mentioning **Nasi Lemak**. This iconic dish, especially prevalent in places like Johor Bahru, is a true national treasure. Fragrant rice cooked in coconut milk and pandan leaves forms the base, served with a fiery **sambal** (chilli paste), crispy fried anchovies, roasted peanuts, a hard-boiled egg, and often slices of cucumber. Sometimes, it's accompanied by fried chicken or a fish dish. Nasi Lemak is a harmonious blend of textures and flavours—spicy, savoury, crunchy, and creamy—making it an utterly addictive and deeply satisfying way to begin your day.

Where to try it: Amaya Food Gallery, Amari Johor Bahru

Nasi Lemak



These five Asian breakfasts offer a delightful departure from the humdrum, showcasing the incredible diversity and culinary richness of the continent. So, the next time you're planning your morning meal, consider stepping out of your comfort zone and indulging in one of these delicious and truly unforgettable Asian breakfast experiences. Fancy giving one of these a whirl?



Club Pahana: Amari Colombo

➤ Where Comfort Meets Cuisine ◀

Elevated dining and downtime, no matter what your schedule.

Amari's Club Lounges: An Exclusive Touch

Many Amari hotels offer a special touch with their Club Lounges, providing a quiet, exclusive space for guests in Executive Rooms and Suites. Open daily, these lounges offer practical amenities including a buffet breakfast, all-day tea and coffee, light refreshments, and early evening drinks. For added convenience, guests can also enjoy private check-in and check-out services. Designed for both productivity and relaxation, these spaces cater to international travellers and business guests with flexible hours and attentive service. Whether you're starting your day with a light meal or unwinding after meetings, Amari's Club Lounges offer a comfortable setting with discreet service designed to please you.

You can find Amari's exclusive Club Lounges at the following locations:

Club Siraa: Amari Bangkok
Club Pahana: Amari Colombo
Club Tebrau: Amari Johor Bahru
Club Napha: Amari Pattaya

Club Pakarang: Amari Phuket
Club Tiffin: Amari SPICE Penang
Club Nava: Amari Vientiane

Amaya Food Gallery: A Culinary Journey

Amaya Food Gallery is a vibrant dining spot, a signature feature of Amari Hotels and Resorts, offering a cracking selection of Asian cuisine with contemporary touches. Designed around open kitchen concepts, these vibrant spaces feature live cooking stations that bring energy and immediacy to your dining experience. Guests can tuck into a wide variety of regional dishes—from Thai curries to Indian tandoori and Chinese wok-fried options—served throughout the day. The restaurant caters to both quick business lunches and more leisurely meals, with a strong focus on variety, freshness, and convenience. Amaya Food Gallery provides a relaxed and well-rounded culinary experience in a modern setting.



Off the Clock in Bangkok

Short on time but big on experiences? Here are three tailored day trips for business travellers in the Big Mango

Ancient temples stand beside gleaming skyscrapers, street vendors serve comfort food just steps from luxury hotels, and traditional rituals unfold alongside cutting-edge innovation—Bangkok is a city of striking contrasts, where timeless traditions meet modern creativity. It is truly the epicentre of much of the country's finance, art, culture, and commerce. Beyond its bustling business districts, the city offers unforgettable journeys that reveal a side often overlooked by busy visitors. Even if you're in town for serious business, you won't want to miss the one-of-a-kind charm the Big Mango has to offer. And even if you have just a single day, you can take in more than you ever imagined.

To make things easier, we've crafted a handful of one-day itineraries to help you explore Bangkok's many layers—from off-the-beaten-path neighbourhoods and historic sites to vibrant art scenes and bold flavours. Step away from your meetings and discover the cultural treasures that make this city truly unforgettable—experiences that go well beyond business.

Kanom Tuay or steamed coconut dessert at Nang Loeng Market ▼



The Local Food Route

One of the things that keeps people hooked on Bangkok is its food scene—from internationally acclaimed and Michelin-starred restaurants to inventive fusion dishes and the iconic street food of the city. If you'd like to dedicate a day to exploring the city's rich culinary culture like a local, here's our recommended itinerary.

Morning to Noon

Pom Prab Sattru Phai Area

Pom Prab Sattru Phai is an old residential district brimming with long-established restaurants that rarely appear on mainstream to-do lists. Among local favourites is **Khao Man Kai Jae Yi** near Wat Saket, serving one of the city's most satisfying versions of khao man kai—a Thai twist on Hainanese-style chicken rice—along with a variety of hearty soups that are both delicious and nourishing, such as stuffed bitter melon with minced pork, and chicken and melon in pickled lime soup. Open from 6:00am, it's a great place to kick-start your day. Afterwards, take a 13-minute walk or a short taxi ride to **Nang Loeng Market**, where you can sample truly local bites—from sweet treats to rare finds. Don't miss the famous braised pork soup at **Neua Tun Nang Loeng** or the unique pork curry at **Nangleung Pork Curry & Stew Rice**.



*Bua Loy
Ket Kaew*

Afternoon

The Giant Swing Area

Continue on to the Giant Swing, known in Thai as “Sao Ching Cha,” about 10 minutes from Nang Loeng Market. The area takes its name from the iconic, towering red swing-like monument that stands in the heart of the neighbourhood, which is lined with shops offering a variety of sweet treats. For classic mango sticky rice—a must-try in this city—head to **K. Panich Sticky Rice**. For a local favourite, try **Bua Loy Ket Kaew**, which serves glutinous rice flour balls in thick coconut milk with salted egg—a surprisingly harmonious combination. To delve deeper into local history, The **Gingerbread House** offers traditional Thai desserts in a beautifully preserved historic building.

Evening

Yaowarat (Chinatown)

No Bangkok food experience is complete without a visit to Chinatown. Thai culture today is heavily influenced by Chinese traditions, and many must-try dishes can be found right here in Yaowarat—which is arguably more densely packed with Michelin Guide restaurants than any other area in the country. A centre of Chinese settlement since the 17th century, the area evolved into a major trading hub and now draws food lovers with its dazzling street food scene. For a sit-down meal, **Chop Chop Cook Shop** serves old-style Chinese-Western dishes (known as “cookshop” cuisine), while **Phukej Restaurant** specialises in flavourful Southern Thai cuisine. For something a bit more local—and more affordable—try **Khao Tom Jay Suay**, a cosy shophouse serving a variety of bold, comforting dishes that pair well with warm boiled rice.

All About Arts

Bangkok's art scene is second to none, with modern art galleries and traditional museums scattered throughout the city. Beyond sheer aesthetics, many exhibitions invite you to reflect on Thai ways of life, social issues, and cultural themes, while others simply allow you to relax and stay in the moment. Expect to be surprised by the creative design of spaces and the unique products found in these areas.

Talad Noi ▼



Morning to Noon

Siam or Thonburi

Opening at 10:00am, the **Jim Thompson Art Center** is an excellent place to begin your art-focused day, with a modest entry fee. Tucked down a peaceful alley in the heart of Bangkok, the centre showcases contemporary art in various forms, with a focus on social context. Right next door is the unmissable Jim Thompson House Museum, home to the personal art collection of Jim Thompson—the American businessman behind the booming Thai silk industry in the 1950s and '60s. A former architect, Thompson designed the mansion himself, down to the smallest detail. Just a short walk away is the grand **Bangkok Art and Culture Centre**, which hosts rotating exhibitions by both local and international artists. Here, you can also browse handmade crafts, sample creative desserts, or enjoy lunch.

Alternatively, for a more community-oriented experience, head to **The Artist House Bangkok** on the Thonburi side of the river. This centuries-old wooden house sits along a canal and offers a tranquil atmosphere. Though compact, it's rich in local art and often hosts engaging workshops. It's the perfect spot for a slow-paced morning.

Afternoon and Evening

Talad Noi

Talad Noi is one of Bangkok's oldest Chinese communities and was once a vital trading hub. Today, the area has transformed into a trendy neighbourhood adorned with street art by both Thai and international artists, along with a host of creative venues. **Warehouse 30**—a former warehouse turned art space—features a café, galleries, and eclectic shops where you can easily get lost for hours or spend an entire day. Just a short walk away, **ATT 19** is a multi-level heritage building repurposed into a distinctive gallery and concept store, offering a curated selection of art and design objects. The second floor includes a beautiful multi-purpose space for exhibitions, talks, and workshops. If you're still craving more visual inspiration, the nearby **River City Bangkok** hosts rotating exhibitions and is a lively hub for contemporary art. You'll also find several smaller galleries, stylish restaurants, and bars in the area.

A Trip Through Time

With its rich history, delving into Bangkok's past can make your trip all the more memorable. From age-old customs to historic neighbourhoods, the city offers countless glimpses into its cultural evolution. Whether you're a first-time visitor or returning for a deeper look, these places offer moments that reflect the city's enduring charm.

Khlong Lat Mayom ▼



Morning

Floating Markets

Floating markets are a way of life deeply rooted in Bangkok's culture. With canals (known as "khlong" in Thai) weaving through the city, they were once vital transport routes where people traded goods directly from boats. On the outskirts of Bangkok, this tradition lives on—vendors still sell food and products from boat to boat, or house to house along the riverside. **Khlong Lat Mayom** and **Taling Chan** floating markets, both located on the Thonburi side of the city, are excellent places to experience this. Packed with local food and handicrafts from both on-land stalls and boat vendors, they open early and are perfect for a unique breakfast experience. These do require at least over an hour of travel time, so pencil this in for a morning start time.

Noon

Phra Sumen Road

In less than 20 minutes, you can travel from the floating markets to Phra Nakhon, home to important landmarks including the riverside **Phra Sumen Fort**. Around the fort, you'll find charming shophouses and eateries such as **Nai Soie Beef Noodle**, **Karim Roti Mataba**, and **Khun Daeng's Vietnamese Noodle**. The area exudes a laid-back charm, and for something sweet after your meal, consider **Coconut Culture Bangkok** or **Petite Soleil**.

Afternoon

Bangkok's Old Town

Once recharged, visit some of the city's unmissable landmarks in the Old Town, such as the **Grand Palace**, the **Emerald Buddha Temple** (Wat Phra Kaew), **Wat Pho**, the **Golden Mount**, and the **Giant Swing**. For a deeper dive into Thai history, head to the **Bangkok National Museum** to view traditional art and ancient artefacts, **Museum Siam** for an interactive journey through Thai identity, or the **Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall** for an immersive overview of Bangkok's past.

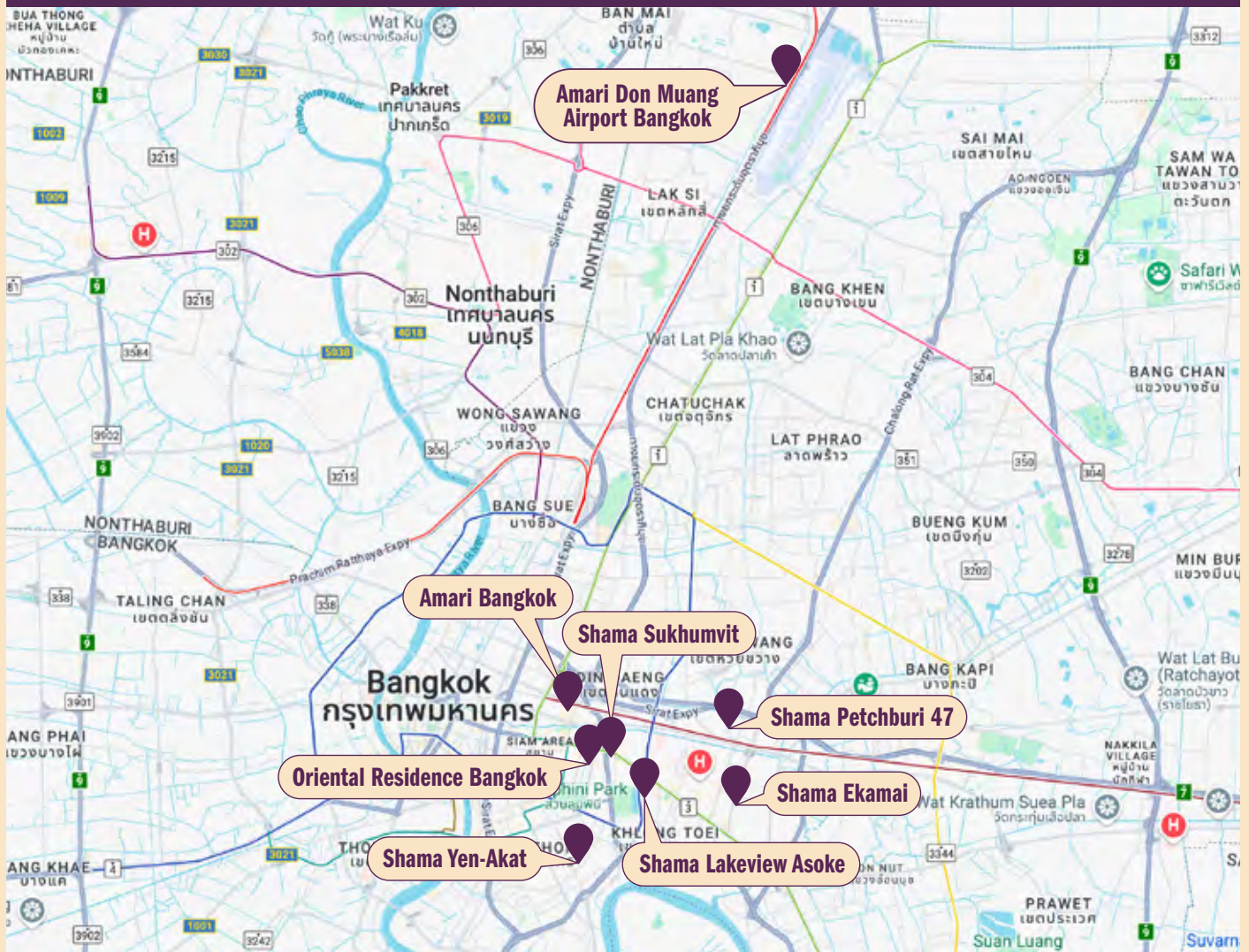
Evening

Tha Tien

For a mesmerising sunset, make your way to **Tha Tien**, a riverside community facing Wat Arun across the river. The area is a hotspot for photography and home to numerous eateries with stunning views. Highlights include **RONGROS**, **Eat Sight Story Deck**, **Horsamut**, **Eagle Nest**, **The Deck by Arun Residence**, and **Chom Arun**. A stroll along the old shophouses here is an experience in itself. ■

➤ For Every Kind of Stay ◀

ONYX Hospitality Group has you covered across Bangkok with hotels designed for convenience and comfort, giving travellers a wealth of locations and styles to choose from.



Amari

Amari Bangkok anchors the Ratchaprasong district with 564 spacious rooms and suites, meeting facilities and a line-up of standout restaurants—Prego, ChomSindh, NILA and more—making it equally suited to business and leisure. **Amari Don Muang Airport Bangkok** connects directly to the airport via an enclosed walkway. The hotel is currently undergoing exciting refurbishments, soon to be completed, that will further enhance its sophisticated accommodations. Guests can look forward to beautifully refreshed rooms, an all-day dining venue, and a generous pool deck – perfect for a relaxing rest between flights.

Oriental Residence

On tree-lined Wireless Road, **Oriental Residence Bangkok** blends discreet luxury with impeccable comfort and refined amenities. Guests can enjoy French-inspired comfort food at Café Claire, breezy daytime bites by the pool at The Play Deck, or crafted cocktails and canapes at the stylish Oriental Bar. Elegant suites, attentive service and a central address place shopping, business and nightlife within easy reach—ideal for work or weekend escapes.

Shama

Whether you need a short city break or a longer base, Shama's properties deliver apartment-style living in Bangkok's key districts. **Shama Ekamai** provides a cosy retreat in a quiet area of one of Bangkok's most popular neighbourhoods nearby tons of cool shops and the BTS skytrain system, and comes with extra spacious one- to four-bedroom units for families or groups—perfect for a long, comfortable stay. In the CBD, **Shama Lakeview Asoke** pairs contemporary design with lakeside and panoramic Benchakitti Park views, while **Shama Petchburi 47** offers generously sized suites in a quiet enclave minutes from Thonglor and Phrom Phong, while Bangkok Hospital is only a two-minute walk away. **Shama Sukhumvit** sits on the vibrant Ploen Chit-Nana area, giving business travellers spacious, fully equipped accommodation for stays of any length. Finally, the pet-friendly **Shama Yen-Akat** lies a quick ten-minute hop from Silom and Sathorn, offering everything from well-planned studios to two-bedroom suites, plus Brunch Paradiso, a pet-friendly eatery that serves international comfort food from dawn to dusk.

Coastal Indian Essence

Specialising in Coastal Indian gastronomy with Portuguese influences, NILA is defined by its vibrant ambience and complex Indian textures.

NILA
COASTAL INDIAN ESSENCE



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Undoubtedly
THE **JUICIEST**
BURGER
on Koh Samui

AT STACKED BURGERS,
THERE IS NOTHING
WE TAKE MORE SERIOUSLY
THAN OUR PERFECT RECIPE



Website



Direction



Menu



Burger
Connoisseurs



Finger licking!!!
Food Network





PREGO

ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Discover The True Essence of Authenticity

with Prego's exquisite culinary creations. Each dish is crafted with love and care, using Chef Marco's cherished family recipes that have been passed down for over a hundred years.

Koh Samui

12.00 hrs to midnight

Bangkok

12.00 hrs to midnight

Pattaya

Breakfast

7.30 hrs to 11.00 hrs

Lunch & Dinner

11.30 hrs to 23.00 hrs

Kata

12.00 hrs to midnight

Colombo

12.00 hrs to midnight



WEBSITE

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CHOMSINDH

TASTES OF THAI

Authentic Thai fresh seafood delicacies,
sustainably from local waters and lands.



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LOCAL PULSES

Khun Armie, our attentive Concierge at Shama Lakeview Asoke Bangkok, talks about hidden gems, green spaces, and the rhythms of one of Bangkok's most bustling neighbourhoods

As concierge at Shama Lakeview Asoke Bangkok, Khun Armie: Palapong Sangjanda has a front-row seat to one of the city's most vibrant and dynamic neighbourhoods. With years of experience welcoming travellers from around the world, he has cultivated a deep knowledge of the area's hidden gems, cultural landmarks, and everyday rhythms. From tranquil parks to under-the-radar eateries and rooftop views, Armie offers guests more than directions—he curates experiences. Here, he shares his personal recommendations for discovering the authentic side of Bangkok, whether you have 24 hours or a week to explore.

What do you think sets Asoke apart from other neighbourhoods in Bangkok for visitors?

Our location truly sets us apart. Nestled in the heart of Bangkok, Asoke is where the city's vibrant energy meets everyday convenience. It's a dynamic neighbourhood with shopping centres, serene temples, buzzing nightlife, and excellent transport links—all just steps away. Whether you're a culture seeker, food lover, or business traveller, Asoke offers a complete Bangkok experience with everything right at your doorstep.

Could you share a hidden gem in the Asoke area that most tourists don't know about?

Tucked away on Sukhumvit 22 is Ruen Mallika—a charming restaurant that feels like stepping into a traditional Thai home. It's one of my personal favourites for its authentic cuisine, elegant architecture, and warm Thai hospitality. Most tourists miss it, but those who go are always delighted.

What is your personal favourite neighbourhood in Bangkok?

I'm most drawn to the Benchakitti Park area—it's my personal escape from the city's fast pace. I love jogging along the lake during golden hour when the sky glows and the breeze cools everything down. The elevated skywalk through the trees offers stunning views—it's a peaceful oasis right in the city.



What's your recommendation for a relaxing afternoon in Bangkok for first-time visitors?

Terminal 21 Asoke is a perfect place to begin your Bangkok journey. It's more than just a mall—it's a travel-themed shopping experience connected directly to the BTS. You can shop, dine on every floor, catch a film upstairs, or simply wander and enjoy. It's a relaxing way to soak in Bangkok's energy without going far.

What are your favourite day trips or excursions from Bangkok?

Whenever I have time off, I find myself wandering the vibrant streets of Yaowarat, Bangkok's Chinatown. The atmosphere is electric—colourful signs, sizzling street food, and endless hidden alleys to explore. No matter how many times I visit, I always discover something new. And of course, the Thai street food is unbeatable.

Do you have any favourite rooftop bars or scenic spots near Asoke for catching a great sunset?

One unforgettable sunset I witnessed was from the rooftop of the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre. It's not the most obvious sunset spot, but the sweeping city views were absolutely breathtaking. That golden hour moment stayed with

me—peaceful, cinematic, and right in the heart of the city.

Where can guests see a more authentic side of Bangkok, away from the tourist crowds?

Hop on the BTS to Mo Chit and head to Suan Rot Fai—also known as the Railway Park. It's a world away from the crowds, filled with wide-open green spaces, cycling paths, and locals enjoying quiet time with friends and family. It's a wonderful way to experience Bangkok's slower, more genuine rhythm.

What's one surprising thing guests often don't realise about staying in the Asoke area?

Many guests are amazed to find a world-class Muay Thai gym just next door to our hotel! It's a hidden gem for those curious about Thailand's national sport. You don't have to travel far—some of Thailand's top fighters train right there, and guests are often surprised by how close and accessible it is.

Is there a nearby spot where locals love to eat that's not on the typical tourist radar?

Yes—Phai Singto is a true hidden treasure. It's a humble Isaan-style Thai restaurant just around the corner, where locals line up after work for spicy, flavourful dishes. The menu is in Thai, the atmosphere is lively, and the

food is unforgettable. It's where you'll find the real Bangkok—on a plate.

How has the neighbourhood changed in recent years, and how has that affected what you recommend to guests?

The most exciting recent change is the opening of Emsphere—just one BTS stop away at Phrom Phong. It's added even more life to the area with luxury shops, new restaurants, and entertainment spaces. It's now one of the trendiest places to explore, and guests often return with shopping bags and stories to share.

If a guest only has 24 hours in Bangkok, how would you suggest they spend it starting from Shama?

Start by soaking in the view from your apartment—a moment to relax after your travels. Then take a morning walk or jog at Benchakitti Park to refresh your senses. If you're eager to explore, join one of our Shama Social Club activities designed to enhance the guest experience and bring our community together. In the afternoon, enjoy some quiet time by our lap pool or wander into Terminal 21 for some light shopping and dining. In just one day, you'll experience both the peaceful and vibrant sides of Bangkok—all from the comfort and connection of Shama. ■

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LOCAL PULSES

Khun Mind of Amari Pattaya's maai spa shares what it means to find calmness on the coast, the intricacies of Thai healing, and the understated power of scent

As a manager of maai spa at Amari Pattaya, Khun Mind: Praewpatch Turaharn brings a deep sense of purpose to her work, guided by Thai healing traditions and a belief in the restorative power of nature. In a city often associated with nightlife, she champions Pattaya's more tranquil side—one rooted in balance, breath, and botanical wisdom. From her favourite local herbs to her daily rituals of reflection and movement, Khun Mind offers insight into how wellness is woven into Thai culture. Here, she shares her perspective on what it means to truly relax, recharge, and reconnect by the sea.

What do you think is the biggest misconception that travellers have about Pattaya?

Many think Pattaya is only about nightlife, but there's a softer, more soulful side. Wellness retreats, cultural experiences, and nature escapes are growing here. It's a destination where you can party or find peace.

What do you think makes Pattaya a good destination for wellness and relaxation?

Pattaya is more than just beautiful beaches and stunning sunsets. It's truly a place where people can completely disconnect from stress and reconnect with themselves. The relaxed coastal vibe, combined with warm Thai hospitality and traditional wellness practices, creates an ideal environment for healing and feeling refreshed.

Culturally, how do you think Thai people approach wellness and self-care?

In Thai culture, wellness is all about balancing your body, mind, and nature. We use everyday food as medicine, with important ingredients like lemongrass, ginger, lime and turmeric. Thai people also value wellness practices, such as herbal compress massages and mindfulness practice. It's not just about pampering, but it's about living in harmony with oneself and nature.



What are some natural spots in or around Pattaya that you find especially peaceful or rejuvenating?

I personally love the quiet corners of Amari Pattaya Beach Lawn that face the sea. Even a walk along the less crowded beaches at sunrise can be incredibly grounding. Nature here has a gentle way of reminding us to slow down.

Are there any traditional Thai ingredients or herbs you think have powerful healing properties?

Two of my personal favourites are osmanthus and champaca. This is because I strongly believe in the profound healing properties of scent and emotional well-being. Both osmanthus and champaca are also at the heart of our Amari Thai Twist signature scent. Osmanthus, with its soft, floral aroma, is known to calm the mind and lift the spirit. Champaca, with its rich, exotic fragrance, helps soothe emotional tension and promotes inner peace.

How do you think the sea and coastal atmosphere affect people's mood and wellbeing?

The sea has a calming rhythm that naturally lowers stress. The salty air, the sound of waves, and the open horizon help people breathe deeper and feel lighter. It's like nature's own therapy session.

What daily rituals do you follow to take care of your body and mind?

I start each morning with warm herbal tea and deep breathing. I also take time to stretch and reflect before the day begins. In the evening, I enjoy a short foot soak with sea salt; it's simple but powerful.

Is there a particular massage or treatment at maai spa that guests often overlook but you personally recommend?

Our Jade Stone Massage is truly something special—it's like a hidden gem. We use real jade stones that actually give off positive ions. When you combine that gentle heat with our energy-balancing techniques, it really helps melt away deep tension and get your energy back. Honestly, so many of our guests are just amazed by how incredibly relaxing and refreshing they feel afterwards.

How do you personally recharge or unwind after a long day of work at the spa?

After work, I always walk back to my condo. That short 2 km walk, with a little sweat and fresh air, helps me release any lingering stress or negative energy from the day.

What's one small self-care tip you believe everyone should practise—even when they're not on holiday?

Say "thank you" every morning when you wake up. It's a simple act, but it sets

a powerful tone for the day. Gratitude helps shift your energy, calm your mind, and open your heart. Even when life feels busy or uncertain, starting the day with appreciation creates space for peace and positivity.

Have you noticed any wellness trends that more guests are asking about lately?

Guests are becoming more curious about scent healing, especially regarding Thai herbal aromas and aromatherapy blends. They're drawn to natural scents that not only relax the body but also uplift the spirit. One trend we've noticed is the growing interest in portable scent pouches—small herbal sachets or aroma-infused pouches that guests can take with them to their car or office.

How does maai spa blend modern wellness techniques with traditional Thai practices?

At maai spa, we believe true wellness comes from honouring the past while embracing the present. We blend traditional Thai healing practices like herbal compresses, Thai massage, and energy balancing with modern wellness techniques such as aromatherapy, Jade Stone therapy, and personalised treatments. Our therapists are trained to understand both ancient wisdom and contemporary wellness. We don't just offer treatments but we offer a journey that connects tradition with transformation. ■





August-October, 2025



A PARISIAN SOUL IN BANGKOK

A look at a quiet retreat that mixes
elegant French design and lush
Bangkok greenery

Situated in the heart of Bangkok, Café Claire is a serene French-inspired retreat on Wireless Road, where Parisian elegance meets warm hospitality. From early morning onwards, the bistro serves French favourites with thoughtful twists, from leisurely brunches and afternoon treats to delightful dinners.

To refresh the experience at this much-loved venue, Café Claire has recently rolled out brand-new menu with meticulous updates, featuring perfectly baked croissants, savoury steak frites, coq au vin, and many more classics, designed for all occasions—whether you are escaping the city's bustle or looking to celebrate a special day, Café Claire sets the perfect scene. Here's some shots that capture that vibe. ■





ONYX Hospitality Group

A Tailored Approach to Hospitality

Based in Bangkok, ONYX Hospitality Group is one of Southeast Asia's most experienced hospitality management companies, with a portfolio that spans over five decades. The company oversees a diverse range of properties across Thailand, Malaysia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Hong Kong, offering tailored hospitality solutions through a collection of well-established brands. These include Amari, OZO, Shama, and Oriental Residence. In addition to managing hotels and serviced residences, ONYX also operates a number of spa and restaurant brands, including maai spa, Breeze spa, Prego, Nila and Chom Sindh.

ONYX combines a global service mindset with the ability to adapt to local contexts. With a track record of success across multiple markets and a clear understanding of the ever-changing landscape of customer expectations, ONYX continues to position itself as a forward-thinking leader in the region's evolving tourism landscape.



Amari Bangkok

OZO North Pattaya

Shama Lakeview Asoke

Oriental Residence Bangkok

Meet the Brands

Amari

ONYX's flagship upper-upscale brand, Amari, combines modern design with culturally rooted Thai hospitality. Its properties are found in key destinations across Thailand and in select locations abroad, such as Malaysia, Laos, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Designed for both leisure and business travellers, Amari hotels range from urban MICE-focused properties to tranquil beach resorts, all unified by a commitment to exceptional hospitality, deeply rooted in Thai heritage yet infused with distinctive local flair.

OZO

A fresh take on the upper-midscale hotel experience, with a youthful and efficient approach geared toward the practical needs of modern travellers. The OZO properties in Thailand and Malaysia deliver a balance of comfort and connectivity, creating a guest experience built around cozy accommodations, local exploration, and an overall light-hearted atmosphere.

Shama

Originally founded in Hong Kong and now operated by ONYX, Shama specialises in serviced apartments for both short and extended stays. With locations in Thailand, China (including Hong Kong), and Malaysia, the brand is structured into three tiers—Shama, Shama Luxe, and Shama Hub—each tailored to different market segments. Shama properties combine hotel-standard services with residential comforts and include the Shama Social Club, a lifestyle initiative designed to help guests connect with their local surroundings.

Oriental Residence

A refined luxury brand currently located in the heart of Bangkok's embassy row (AKA Wireless Road). Catering to discerning travellers, and perfect for both brief visits and extended stays, the property blends the quiet elegance with modern luxury hospitality services guests have come to expect. Surrounded by lush gardens and offering refined amenities, Oriental Residence is a discreet retreat in the middle of the city.

www.onyx-hospitality.com

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Nila at Amari Bangkok

CULINARY DELIGHTS

Café Claire: A Fresh Taste of Paris in Bangkok

Café Claire at Oriental Residence Bangkok is excited to unveil its superb new menu, the first significant update in over a decade. Drawing inspiration from classic Parisian bistros, the refreshed menu champions simplicity and seasonal flavours. Led by Executive Chef Remi Verrier, a culinary expert with a background in Michelin-starred establishments, Café Claire now offers an even more authentic yet approachable French dining experience. Enjoy classics like **Escargots Traditionnels** and **Crispy Duck Leg**, all crafted to deliver "delicacies with a Parisian soul."

Nila to Unveil "Chapter Two": An Indian Culinary Journey

Get ready for an exciting new chapter at Nila! This Q4, Nila at Amari Bangkok will relaunch its menu, introducing "Chapter Two" with around 20 new dishes from across India. Designed

to be your new favourite spot for delicious, easy-to-love Indian cuisine, Nila will showcase a diverse array of regional flavours. Brace yourselves for a captivating culinary journey, celebrating India's rich gastronomic heritage.

Maitree Bar: Friendship & Elevated Thai Street Food

We're thrilled to announce the expansion of Maitree Bar, with four new locations opening at Amari Bangkok, Amari Bangsaen, Amari Vientiane, and Amari Hua Hin. Maitree, meaning "friendship" in Thai, perfectly captures the concept of these vibrant lobby bars: offering elevated Thai street food favourites in a relaxed setting. We're committed to sustainability, sourcing all ingredients from within Thailand. Look out for our signature aromatic Thai tea, plus a unique DIY Matcha drink experience at each location, with recipes crafted by local mixologists. Maitree Bar is your ideal spot to unwind and enjoy authentic Thai flavours.



Amari Koh Samui Aqua Toys

ELAVATE YOUR STAY

Splash into Family Fun: New Aqua Toys at Amari Koh Samui!

Amari Koh Samui is excited to reveal a fantastic attraction for our younger guests: the thrilling Aqua Toys experience! Located in the recently opened Garden Wing pool, this vibrant feature has transformed the area into an even more captivating family destination. With colourful, interactive water features, children can enjoy hours of playful adventure, whilst parents relax poolside. This latest offering reinforces Amari Koh Samui's commitment to creating unforgettable family holidays.

maai

feel the glow
as you explore
the Journey of Silk

Explore more



breeze spa

on the bright side of life

Explore more

