The Livable City

Bangkok is one of the most culturally rich, complex and dynamic cities in the world. Endless energy abounds as the city never sleeps. In the mornings, you can find pockets of serenity on temple grounds, or enjoy the serene harmonious steps of Tai-chi exercises at Lumpini Park. You can have a business-like power breakfast at one of the city’s many luxurious hotels, or be trendy and chic sipping coffee at one of the dozens of Starbucks, surf the net on Wi-Fi within the CBD (Central Business District) areas of Silom and Sathorn, or just be laid-back and traditional and have a friendly chat with an old friend at the old coffee houses in Yaowarat.

East meets West: Traditional and Chic

Bangkok is the epitome of the country’s kaleidoscopic blend of old and new. More than anywhere else, it is an expression of the Thai respect for tradition coupled with their vibrant involvement with modern progress.

The city is metropolitan, yet rich in heritage and ready to accept new ideas. Many foreigners can attest to the cosmopolitan lifestyle that Bangkok offers through its cost-competitive condominiums, international schools, hospitals, shopping centers, sports clubs, and golf courses.
Discovering the City

Green Areas and Public Parks

With an increasing population in Bangkok, more public parks and green areas are being developed for recreation and environment. They now serve as the “lungs of the city”, with about 8,097 rais (12.96 sq. km.) of parks and green pockets scattered around the city.
Green Area
Beautiful Parks
Clean Canals and Clean Roads

Environmental management and energy conservation are included as one of the main strategic pillars of the BMA four-year Public Administration Plan, 2005 through 2008.

The plan mandates the increase of more shaded areas by changing vacant spaces into public parks or green areas. This program is to be implemented around buildings, public offices, state enterprises, schools, religious places and private companies, and is part of the effort to improve the quality of life in the city.
Over the years, the BMA has planted numerous trees in Bangkok. The Bangkok Green Project, undertaken to commemorate Her Majesty the Queen’s birthday, on August 12, 2005, is one such initiative, which aims to plant from one to two million trees by 2006.

### 10 Beautiful Public Parks: “The new lungs of Bangkok”

The BMA will increase thirty percent of Bangkok’s green areas by building ten additional public parks. Each park will be opened to the general public and consist of various amenities for recreation and sport activities.

1. Rommaneenat Park (Phra Nakhon District) Area: 28 sq.m.
2. Saranrom Park (Phra Nakhon District) Area: 23 sq.m.
3. Lumphini Park (Prathumwan District) Area: 360 sq.m.
4. The Public Park in Commemoration of H.M. The King’s 60th Cycle Birthony (Tung Kru District) Area: 52 sq.m.
5. Santi Phap Park (Ratchatewi District) Area: 20 sq.m.
6. Chatuchak Park (Chatuchak District) Area: 375 sq.m.
7. Queen Sirikit Park (Chatuchak District) Area: 140 sq.m.
8. Benchasiri Park (Khlong Toei District) Area: 29 sq.m.
9. Thonburirom Park (Prathumwan District) Area: 360 sq.m.
10. Suan Luang Rama IX (Praves District) Area: 500 sq.m.
11. Nong Chok Park (Nong Chok District) Area: 35 sq.m.
12. Vachira Benchatath Park (Chatuchak District) Area: 155.1 sq.m.
13. Seri Thai Park (Bungkum District) Area: 350 sq.m.
14. Phra Nakhon Park (Ladkrabang District) Area: 50 sq.m.
10 Clean Canals Project:

Bangkok once had an elaborate network of canals and hence earned the nickname as the “Venice of the East”. Now, with an existing 1,049 canals left, which are subsidiaries of the major waterways from the Chao Phraya River to Klong San Saab, local communities living along the riverside are faced with pollution problems. The BMA has initiated the Ten Clean Canals project to effectively treat wastewater in the following canals: The Old City Moat, Klong Banglumphu, Klong Wattheptidaram, Klong Wat Ratbophith, Klong Padung-Krung Kasem, Klong Bang Saikai, Klong Bangnamchon, Klong Samlayh and Klong Bang Sakea.
Clean Roads: “Sixty Green Roads”

This project involves developing the scenery along Bangkok’s roads by improving the greenery along the main and secondary transportation arteries in the fifty districts. Ornamental plants and trees are placed about, while small parks and decorations are added and overpass bridges are adorned with beautiful floral ornaments.
Health Care

During the last five years, Bangkok has increasingly become internationally recognized as a high quality, but cost competitive health care provider with dramatic growth in international patients from Europe, United States, Japan, Korea, and the Middle East.

There are a total of 173 hospitals in Bangkok, 42 of which are public hospitals and 131 are privately run. In addition, there are 144 public health service centers and health stations at over 3,000 private clinics within the capital.

BMA Medical Service

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has made public safety one of its highest priorities. It has ensured that a 24 hour Call Center (Dial 1555) is people friendly and ready to respond to any problems faced within Bangkok. In addition, the BMA has also initiated a Bangkok Emergency Service Team (BEST) that is also a “One Stop Service” center, providing 24 hour emergency service at all 50 districts throughout Bangkok. The BMA has established another 24 hour hot-line particularly for fires only (Dial 199).

Public Safety

The current Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has made public safety one of its highest priorities. It has ensured that a 24 hour Call Center (Dial 1555) is customer friendly and ready to respond with any problems face within Bangkok. In addition, the BMA has also initiated a Bangkok Emergency Service Team (BEST) that is also a One Stop Service for 24 hour emergency service at all 50 districts throughout Bangkok. The BMA has established another 24 hour hot-line particularly for fires only (Dial 199).

In order to help prevent crimes, the BMA is currently implementing a “Bright Lights” programs to light up every dark areas and blind spots in all the smaller streets of Bangkok. The BMA is also implementing the “Bangkok Clear” anti-drugs for youth education and prevention of drugs-related crimes.

Number of Beds in BMA Medical Service Department: 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vajira</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tak Sin</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chareen Kung</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luang Pho Phiswak</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nong Chok</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lat Krabang</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratchaphiphat</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirindhorn</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,414</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Planning Sub Division, Technical Division, Medical Service Department
Bangkok Schools and Colleges

There are a total of 1,657 schools in Bangkok. The BMA manages 434 schools ranging from kindergarten to primary, secondary and college education for the children and youth of Bangkok. The Department of Education and Department of Social Welfare jointly work on various education development projects, such as the improvement of education standards, the development of human resources for education, and the provision of learning facilities. Among other academic institutions run by the BMA is the Kuakarun College of Nursing (KCN), which it established in 1954 to prepare nurses for providing care in BMA hospitals. The Bachelor of Nursing Science (B.N.S.) program has been accredited by the Thai Nurses’ Council. In addition, KCN has been affiliated with Mahidol University since 1993. Each year, approximately 120 students graduate from KCN and afterwards work in one of the 9 BMA hospitals and 60 health centers in Bangkok area.

BMA School Development Projects

BMA Smart Schools

- Young Engineers: classes will start in the new semester at all 433 schools run by the BMA, where they will encourage students to think creatively, analyze problems and experiment with ideas. The Young Engineer classes are part of the BMA “smart-school” project, aimed at enhancing the quality of general education in the capital.

- Teacher Development: to improve the quality of BMA teachers in terms of their teaching capacity, improving the learning environment, career development and school management.

Thailand Cultural Promotion: to promote Thai Culture within the BMA schools so that students will be proud of Thai culture and way of life. Performance of Thai classical music, Thai classical dancing and exhibitions on Thai lifestyle will be held continuously and professionally.

International Schools & Universities

Bangkok’s burgeoning international school system continues to expand in recent years—offering a wide range of choices and has become one of the most competitive educational market in the region. There are currently 65 international schools in Bangkok that include a wide range of British, American, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Singaporean accredited curriculums. Examples of leading schools in Bangkok include Harrow International School, that draws on the fine reputation and educational traditions of England’s Harrow School, and whose faculty is mostly from the UK; Shrewsbury International School Bangkok, is an affiliate of the 450 year-old noble English sister establishment.

At the university level, there are 19 state universities and 18 private universities in Bangkok, many with international programs from bachelor to doctoral degrees in wide range of fields. Among the most prestigious international academic programs include the Sasin Graduate School of Business at Chulalongkorn University and the Wharton School of Business and the Asian Institute of Technology.
The BMA runs over 740 recreational facilities for local communities within the 50 districts throughout Bangkok. The facilities are organized for outdoor physical activities such as aerobics, football, basketball, and the local Southeast Asia sport of Takraw. For indoor activities, table tennis, badminton, and weight lifting facilities are available.

There are also many private sports clubs and numerous international standard golf courses in and around Bangkok. Among the leading sports clubs is included the Royal Bangkok Sports Club.
Discovering the City

International Institutions

Bangkok is fast becoming a regional hub for international cultural events, such as the prestigious Bangkok International Festival of Dance & International. In addition, the city is also host to numerous foreign correspondents who cover the ASEAN region.

International Media

There are 18 commercial internet service providers in Bangkok offering broadband and Wi-Fi. With over 50 foreign newspapers there is a wide variety of business dailies and weeklies.

There are also numerous Thai language international publications, such as the National Geographic, Reader’s Digest, Elle, Cosmopolitan, Esquire, Seventeen, FHM, and PC World. There are over 300 radio stations operating throughout the country, including the 3 FM radio stations operating in Bangkok, which include the Virgin Radio Network of popular pop hits. There are also numerous Thai language print and online publications available in Bangkok, which include such media as CNN, BBC, NHK, HBO, and Cinemax.

International Schools & Universities

Bangkok’s international education scene has continued to expand in recent years, offering a wide range of choices. As a result, the city is also home to numerous international universities, many with international programs, and which offer bachelor to doctoral degrees in a wide range of fields.

Among the most prestigious international academic programs is included the Sasin Graduate School of Business, which operates with the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, which also has a graduate school of business. The school also offers a graduate program in business administration.

At the university level, there are 19 public and 18 private universities in Bangkok, many with international programs, and which offer bachelor to doctoral degrees in a wide range of fields.

The annual Bangkok Jazz Festival has also attracted world famous musicians such as Bob James, Incognito and Earl Klugh.
Low Cost of Living

Bangkok has a lower cost of living compared with other major cities in Asia. The Mercer Human Resource’s 2006 Cost of Living Survey ranked Bangkok 127th among 144 cities, measuring the comparative costs of over 200 items, including housing, transport, food, clothing, household goods, and entertainment. The survey is used as a resource for foreign multinational companies and governments to determine compensation allowances for their expatriate employees.

Selected Costs of Living in Bangkok

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Programme</th>
<th>Average Cost (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International University</td>
<td>10,000-15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International School</td>
<td>3,000-14,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Monthly Cost (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Club</td>
<td>50-280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Club</td>
<td>3,280-5,420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Monthly Cost (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maid Service</td>
<td>200-300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serviced Apartment</td>
<td>15-40 per sq.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinema Theaters</td>
<td>2.50-15.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Rental</td>
<td>33-60 per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Food and Beverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pizza</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KFC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Drink (Can)</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Miscellaneous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fuel Cost (Unleaded)</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair Cut</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi Meter (Start Up)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bangkok is more affordable in global survey on cost of living

The new global cost of living survey by Mercer Human Resource Consulting ranks the Thai capital as the 125th most expensive, down from 119th in the 2004 survey.
In 2005, Thailand was ranked as the world’s third most attractive nation for foreign investment in a survey by the UN Commission for Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It is an ideal and practical destination for investment. The Thai government has established the Board of Investment (BOI) to support and assist investors. Through the BOI, investors can gain access to a variety of benefits, including tax incentives, duty concessions, and a range of other advantages.

Thailand’s Ideal Investment Climate

The country has a large domestic market of over 60 million people with an increasingly diversified and balanced economy. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate in 2005 was 4.5 percent, which has helped sustain economic confidence. There are abundant natural resources and an availability of skilled workers, contributing to the rapid growth of the country’s industrial production.

Thailand also has a good infrastructure ready for foreign investors. Improved and modernized transportation facilities, as well as upgraded telecommunications and IT networks, ensure optimum business and living conditions. State-of-the-art industrial estates boast sophisticated facilities and superior services.

Bangkok is a strategic gateway for investment in the Thai market and to the growing ASEAN region of over 500 million people. Its ideal strategic location is right in the heart of Asia-hence what is regarded today as the largest growing economic market. The city is well-placed as a convenient springboard to China, India and the rest of Asia.

Indeed, Bangkok is fast becoming a regional and global sourcing center for procurement of parts and raw materials for many multinational firms. Given the low overhead and cost, it is also becoming an important provider of shared services or captive BPO (Business Processing Offshore) in invoicing, billing, and call centers to global corporate customers.
Composition of Non-Agriculture Sectors in Bangkok GPP 2004-2005

- **PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS WITH EMPLOYED PERSONS**: 4%
- **HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK**: 13%
- **EDUCATION**: 6%
- **ELECTRICITY, GAS AND WATER SUPPLY**: 1%
- **CONSTRUCTION**: 13%
- **REAL ESTATE, RENTING AND BUSINESS ACTIVITIES**: 2%
- **OTHER COMMUNITY, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES ACTIVITIES**: 8%
- **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEFENCE**: 9%
- **COMPULSORY SOCIAL SECURITY**: 11%
- **FINANCIAL INTERMEDIATION**: 5%
- **HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS**: 5%
- **TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATION**: 5%
- **MANUFACTURING**: 0%
- **WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE & MOTOR VEHICLES SERVICES**: 0%

**Source**: NESDB-National Economic and Social Development Board
According to CB Richard Ellis, Bangkok offers highly affordable office space and with the exception of Kuala Lumpur the lowest rates of cities surveyed.

Bangkok, Shanghai, and Hanoi have the lowest water prices.

Wage rates in Bangkok are significantly lower than in all of the other cities, except Mumbai. For instance, Bangkok’s gross wages are 45.6% cheaper than those in Shanghai.
Gems & Jewelry - A World Center

Thailand is a leading exporter of colored gems and the world’s number two exporter of fine jewelry after Italy. Thai diamond cutting expertise is world renowned, as well as its design and precision assembly.

Bangkok’s Gemopolis

Gemopolis is Thailand’s specialized industrial estate exclusively for gems and jewelry located within a 5 minute drive from the Suvarnabhumi Airport, east of Bangkok. A complete supply chain of gems and jewelry industry can be found within a single compound here. There are over 70 large global companies and SMEs that have established their production and trading facilities at Gemopolis.

This industrial estate is a foundation to build a “Gemopolis City”. A mall is being constructed in 3 phases to cover a walking street that offers wholesale jewelry shopping at international gem and jewelry outlets. Furthermore, the BMA is building a medium-sized convention center to support an export center. A multicultural community marketed as an all-in-one “Work-Live-Learn-Shop-Play” is envisaged for exclusive residential areas for expatriate professionals, jewelry retail shops and a jewelry bourse. There will be an exhibition and shopping center, together with hotels and serviced apartments supporting residents and visiting tourists.

Fashion

Fashion is still a relatively young industry in the Kingdom compared to the leading European fashion houses. The government has been enthusiastically supporting the development of the local industry, which is aided by the country’s strengths in the jewelry, leather and garment industries.

The Thai government has identified one of the key issues for the industry is brand-building and design. Although there is a strong OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) garment industry, it needs to move further up the value chain to the more up-scale fashion segment.

Bangkok Fashion City Project

In order to develop a more competitive edge for the Thai international fashion market, the government established the Bangkok Fashion City Project. The project’s roadmap consists of the following 11 projects:

- International Fashion School
- Fashion Trend Center
- Textile & Garment Industry Competitiveness Development
- Leather Industry Competitiveness
- Jewelry Industry Competitiveness Development
- Bangkok Fashion Week
- Trend Setting (Fashion Workshop)
- International Fashion Contest
- Top Fashion Report
- Fashion Road Show
- Bangkok Fashion City Promotion
- Bangkok International Fashion Academy

The first project implemented was the establishment in December 2004 of an international fashion school - the Bangkok International Fashion Academy (BIFA), by Chulalongkorn University, in conjunction with the Institute Francais de la Mode in Paris and the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. In the coming years, the focus of the fashion sector will be on improving and developing new product designs and advancing Thai brands.