

THE WORLD FACTBOOK



Thailand



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Introduction

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Background:

A unified Thai kingdom was established in the mid-14th century. Known as Siam until 1939, Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country never to have been taken over by a European power. A bloodless revolution in 1932 led to a constitutional monarchy. In alliance with Japan during World War II, Thailand became a US ally following the conflict. Thailand is currently facing armed violence in its three Muslim-majority southernmost provinces.

Geography

Thailand

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Location:

Southeastern Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, southeast of Burma

Geographic coordinates:

15 00 N, 100 00 E

Map references:

[Southeast Asia](#)

Area:

total: 514,000 sq km

land: 511,770 sq km

water: 2,230 sq km



Area - comparative:



slightly more than twice the size of Wyoming



Land boundaries:

total: 4,863 km

border countries: Burma 1,800 km, Cambodia 803 km, Laos 1,754 km, Malaysia 506 km



Coastline:  
3,219 km



Maritime claims:  
territorial sea: 12 nm
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm
continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation

Climate:  
tropical; rainy, warm, cloudy southwest monsoon (mid-May to September); dry, cool northeast monsoon (November to mid-March); southern isthmus always hot and humid



Terrain:  
central plain; Khorat Plateau in the east; mountains elsewhere



Elevation extremes:  
lowest point: Gulf of Thailand 0 m
highest point: Doi Inthanon 2,576 m



Natural resources:  
tin, rubber, natural gas, tungsten, tantalum, timber, lead, fish, gypsum, lignite, fluorite, arable land



Land use:  
arable land: 27.54%
permanent crops: 6.93%
other: 65.53% (2005)

Irrigated land:  
49,860 sq km (2003)

Natural hazards:  
land subsidence in Bangkok area resulting from the depletion of the water table; droughts

Environment - current issues:  
air pollution from vehicle emissions; water pollution from organic and factory wastes; deforestation; soil erosion; wildlife populations threatened by illegal hunting



Environment - international agreements:  
party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands
signed, but not ratified: Law of the Sea

Geography - note:  
controls only land route from Asia to Malaysia and Singapore

Population:   

64,631,595



note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

Age structure:  

0-14 years: 22% (male 7,284,068/female 6,958,632)

15-64 years: 70% (male 22,331,312/female 22,880,588)

65 years and over: 8% (male 2,355,190/female 2,821,805) (2006 est.)

Median age:  

total: 31.9 years

male: 31.1 years

female: 32.8 years (2006 est.)

Population growth  



rate: 0.68% (2006 est.)

Birth rate:   



13.87 births/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Death rate:   

7.04 deaths/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Net migration rate:  

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Sex ratio:  




at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female

under 15 years: 1.05 male(s)/female

15-64 years: 0.98 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.84 male(s)/female




total population: 0.98 male(s)/female (2006 est.)

Infant mortality rate:   

total: 19.49 deaths/1,000 live births

male: 20.77 deaths/1,000 live births




female: 18.15 deaths/1,000 live births (2006 est.)

Life expectancy at   




birth: *total population:* 72.25 years

male: 69.95 years




female: 74.68 years (2006 est.)




Total fertility rate:   



1.64 children born/woman (2006 est.)



HIV/AIDS - adult   



prevalence rate: 1.5% (2003 est.)



HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:   
570,000 (2003 est.)



HIV/AIDS - deaths:   
58,000 (2003 est.)



Major infectious diseases:  
degree of risk: high
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea and hepatitis A
vectorborne diseases: dengue fever, malaria, Japanese encephalitis, and plague are high risks in some locations
animal contact disease: rabies
water contact disease: leptospirosis
note: at present, H5N1 avian influenza poses a minimal risk; during outbreaks among birds, rare cases could occur among US personnel who have close contact with infected birds or poultry (2005)

Nationality:  
noun: Thai (singular and plural)
adjective: Thai

Ethnic groups:  
Thai 75%, Chinese 14%, other 11%

Religions:  
Buddhist 94.6%, Muslim 4.6%, Christian 0.7%, other 0.1% (2000 census)



Languages:  
Thai, English (secondary language of the elite), ethnic and regional dialects



Literacy:  
definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 92.6%
male: 94.9%
female: 90.5% (2002)



Government



Thailand

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Country name:  
conventional long form: Kingdom of Thailand
conventional short form: Thailand
former: Siam

Government type:  
constitutional monarchy



Capital:  
Bangkok

Administrative divisions:  



76 provinces (changwat, singular and plural); Amnat Charoen, Ang Thong, Buriram, Chachoengsao, Chai Nat, Chaiyaphum, Chanthaburi, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Chon Buri, Chumphon, Kalasin, Kamphaeng Phet, Kanchanaburi, Khon Kaen, Krabi, Krung Thep Mahanakhon (Bangkok), Lampang, Lamphun, Loei, Lop Buri, Mae Hong Son, Maha Sarakham, Mukdahan, Nakhon Nayok, Nakhon Pathom, Nakhon Phanom, Nakhon Ratchasima, Nakhon Sawan, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nan, Narathiwat, Nong Bua Lamphu, Nong Khai, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Pattani, Phangnga, Phatthalung, Phayao, Phetchabun, Phetchaburi, Phichit, Phitsanulok, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Phrae, Phuket, Prachin Buri, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Ranong, Ratchaburi, Rayong, Roi Et, Sa Kaeo, Sakon Nakhon, Samut Prakan, Samut Sakhon, Samut Songkhram, Sara Buri, Satun, Sing Buri, Sisaket, Songkhla, Sukhothai, Suphan Buri, Surat Thani, Surin, Tak, Trang, Trat, Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani, Uthai Thani, Uttaradit, Yala, Yasothon

Independence:  



1238 (traditional founding date; never colonized)

National holiday:  



Birthday of King PHUMIPHON, 5 December (1927)

Constitution:  

new constitution signed by King PHUMIPHON on 11 October 1997

Legal system:  

based on civil law system, with influences of common law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage:  

18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Executive branch:  

chief of state: King PHUMIPHON Adunyadet (since 9 June 1946)

head of government: Prime Minister THAKSIN Chinnawat (since 9 February 2001) and Deputy Prime Ministers CHITTHAI Wannasathit (since 11 March 2005), SOMKHIT Chatusiphithak (since 11 March 2005), SUCHAI Charoenrattanakhun (since 31 October 2005), SURAKIAT Sathianthai (since 11 March 2005), SURIYA Chungrungruankit (since 2 August 2005), SUWAT Liptapanlop (since 2 August 2005), WISANU Kruangam (since 3 November 2002)

note: Prime Minister THAKSIN stepped aside on 5 April 2006; CHITTHAI Wannasathit became acting prime minister; THAKSIN resumed duties on 23 May 2006 as caretaker prime minister

cabinet: Council of Ministers

note: there is also a Privy Council

elections: none; the monarch is hereditary; prime minister is designated from among the members of the House of Representatives; following national elections for the House of Representatives, the leader of the party that can organize a majority coalition usually is appointed prime minister by the king

Legislative branch:



bicameral National Assembly or Rathasapha consists of the Senate or Wuthisapha (200 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve six-year terms) and the House of Representatives or Sapha Phuthaen Ratsadon (500 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

elections: Senate - last held 19 April 2006 (next to be held in April 2012); House of Representatives - last held 6 February 2005 (next to be held on 15 October 2006)

note: snap election for House was held on 2 April 2006; election was invalidated by Constitution Court

election results: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - NA; House of Representatives - (2005 election) percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - TRT 376, DP 97, TNP 25, PP 2

Judicial branch:



Supreme Court or Sandika (judges appointed by the monarch)

Political parties and
leaders:

Democrat Party or DP (Prachathipat Party) [ABHISIT Wetchachiwa]; People's Party or PP (Mahachon Party) [ANEK Laothamatas]; Thai Nation Party or TNP (Chat Thai Party) [BARNHARN SILPA-ARCHA]; Thai Rak Thai Party or TRT [THAKSIN Chinnawat]

Political pressure
groups and leaders:

NA

International
organization
participation:

APEC, APT, ARF, AsDB, ASEAN, BIMSTEC, BIS, CP, EAS, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICCT (signatory), ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITU, MIGA, NAM, OAS (observer), OIC (observer), ONUB, OPCW, OSCE (partner), PCA, UN, UNAMSIL, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic
representation in the
US:

chief of mission: Virasakdi FUTRAKUL

chancery: 1024 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20007-3681

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FAX: [1] (202) 944-3611

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Diplomatic
representation from
the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Ralph L. BOYCE

embassy: 120-122 Wireless Road, Bangkok 10330

mailing address: APO AP 96546

telephone: [66] (2) 205-4000

FAX: [66] (2) 254-2990, 205-4131

consulate(s) general: Chiang Mai

Flag description:








five horizontal bands of red (top), white, blue (double width), white, and red




Economy - overview:  



With a well-developed infrastructure, a free-enterprise economy, and pro-investment policies, Thailand appears to have fully recovered from the 1997-98 Asian Financial Crisis. The country was one of East Asia's best performers in 2002-04. Boosted by increased consumption and strong export growth, the Thai economy grew 6.9% in 2003 and 6.1% in 2004 despite a sluggish global economy. Bangkok has pursued preferential trade agreements with a variety of partners in an effort to boost exports and to maintain high growth. In 2004, Thailand and the US began negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement. In late December 2004, a major tsunami took 8,500 lives in Thailand and caused massive destruction of property in the southern provinces of Krabi, Phangnga, and Phuket. Growth slowed to 4.4% in 2005. The downturn can be attributed to high oil prices, weaker demand from Western markets, severe drought in rural regions, tsunami-related declines in tourism, and lower consumer confidence. Moreover, the THAKSIN administration's expansionist economic policies, including plans for multi-billion-dollar mega-projects in infrastructure and social development, has raised concerns about fiscal discipline and the health of financial institutions. On the positive side, the Thai economy performed well beginning in the third quarter of 2005. Export-oriented manufacturing - in particular automobile production - and farm output are driving these gains. In 2006, the economy should benefit from an influx of investment and a revived tourism sector; however, a possible avian flu epidemic could significantly harm economic prospects throughout the region.

GDP (purchasing power parity):   
\$560.7 billion (2005 est.)



GDP (official exchange rate):  
\$183.9 billion (2005 est.)




GDP - real growth rate:   
4.5% (2005 est.)



GDP - per capita (PPP):   
\$8,300 (2005 est.)



GDP - composition by sector:  
agriculture: 9.3%
industry: 45.1%
services: 45.6% (2005 est.)



Labor force:   
35.36 million (2005 est.)




Labor force - by occupation:  
agriculture: 49%
industry: 14%
services: 37% (2000 est.)




Unemployment rate:   
1.4% (September 2005)



Population below poverty line:  
10% (2004 est.)




Household income or consumption by percentage share:   *lowest 10%: 2.8%*
highest 10%: 32.4% (1998)



Distribution of family income - Gini index:   51.1 (2002)



Inflation rate (consumer prices):    4.8% (2005 est.)




Investment (gross fixed):    31.7% of GDP (2005 est.)

Budget:  
revenues: \$30.64 billion
expenditures: \$31.76 billion; including capital expenditures of \$5 billion (2005 est.)

Public debt:    35.9% of GDP (2005 est.)



Agriculture - products:  
rice, cassava (tapioca), rubber, corn, sugarcane, coconuts, soybeans



Industries:  
tourism, textiles and garments, agricultural processing, beverages, tobacco, cement, light manufacturing such as jewelry and electric appliances, computers and parts, integrated circuits, furniture, plastics, automobiles and automotive parts; world's second-largest tungsten producer and third-largest tin producer




Industrial production growth rate:    8.2% (2005 est.)




Electricity - production:    114.7 billion kWh (2003)




Electricity - consumption:    107.3 billion kWh (2003)




Electricity - exports:   315 million kWh (2003)

Electricity - imports:   980 million kWh (2003)

Oil - production:    230,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - consumption:    851,000 bbl/day (2004 est.)




Oil - exports:    NA bbl/day




Oil - imports:   
NA bbl/day



Oil - proved reserves:   
583 million bbl (November 2003)




Natural gas - production:   
22.28 billion cu m (2003 est.)

Natural gas - consumption:   
29.15 billion cu m (2003 est.)



Natural gas - exports:   
0 cu m (2001 est.)



Natural gas - imports:   
5.2 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - proved reserves:   
377.7 billion cu m (November 2003)



Current account balance:   
\$-5.901 billion (2005 est.)



Exports:   
\$105.8 billion f.o.b. (2005 est.)




Exports - commodities:  
textiles and footwear, fishery products, rice, rubber, jewelry, automobiles, computers and electrical appliances

Exports - partners:  
US 16.1%, Japan 14%, China 7.4%, Singapore 7.3%, Malaysia 5.5%, Hong Kong 5.1% (2004)



Imports:   
\$107 billion f.o.b. (2005 est.)



Imports - commodities:  
capital goods, intermediate goods and raw materials, consumer goods, fuels

Imports - partners:  
Japan 23.7%, China 8.7%, US 7.7%, Malaysia 5.9%, Singapore 4.4%, Taiwan 4.1% (2004)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:   
\$51.9 billion (December 2005)

Debt - external:   
\$50.63 billion (30 June 2005 est.)

Economic aid - recipient:  
\$72 million (2002)

Currency (code):  
baht (THB)

Exchange rates:



baht per US dollar - 40.22 (2005), 40.222 (2004), 41.485 (2003), 42.96 (2002), 44.432 (2001)

Fiscal year:



1 October - 30 September

Communications**Thailand**[Top of Page](#)

Telephones - main
lines in use:



6.797 million (2004)

Telephones - mobile
cellular:



27.379 million (2005)

Telephone system:



general assessment: high quality system, especially in urban areas like Bangkok; WTO requirement for privatization of telecom sector is planned to be complete by 2006
domestic: fixed line system provided by both a government owned and commercial provider; wireless service expanding rapidly and outpacing fixed lines
international: country code - 66; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (1 Indian Ocean and 1 Pacific Ocean); landing country for APCN submarine cable

Radio broadcast
stations:



AM 204, FM 334, shortwave 6 (1999)

Television broadcast
stations:



111 (2006)

Internet country code:



.th

Internet hosts:



786,226 (2005)

Internet users:



8.42 million (2005)

Transportation**Thailand**[Top of Page](#)

Airports:







108 (2005)



Airports - with paved
runways:






total: 65
over 3,047 m: 7
2,438 to 3,047 m: 10
1,524 to 2,437 m: 24
914 to 1,523 m: 19
under 914 m: 5 (2005)




Airports - with unpaved runways:  
total: 43
over 3,047 m: 1
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1
914 to 1,523 m: 15
under 914 m: 26 (2005)




Heliports:  
 3 (2005)

Pipelines:  
 gas 3,112 km; refined products 265 km (2004)

Railways:   
total: 4,071 km
narrow gauge: 4,071 km 1.000-m gauge (2004)

Roadways:   
total: 57,403 km
paved: 56,542 km
unpaved: 861 km (2000)

Waterways:   
 4,000 km
note: 3,701 km navigable by boats with drafts up to 0.9 m (2005)



Merchant marine:   
total: 394 ships (1000 GRT or over) 2,815,932 GRT/4,341,947 DWT
by type: bulk carrier 59, cargo 145, chemical tanker 14, combination ore/oil 1, container 20, liquefied gas 28, passenger 3, passenger/cargo 5, petroleum tanker 89, refrigerated cargo 29, specialized tanker 1
foreign-owned: 45 (Indonesia 1, Japan 4, South Korea 1, Norway 30, Singapore 9)
registered in other countries: 37 (The Bahamas 1, Liberia 1, Mongolia 1, Panama 10, Singapore 23, Tuvalu 1) (2005)



Ports and terminals:  
 Bangkok, Laem Chabang, Prachuap Port, Si Racha

Military



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Military branches:  
 Royal Thai Army, Royal Thai Navy (includes Royal Thai Marine Corps), Royal Thai Air Force

Military service age and obligation:  
 21 years of age for compulsory military service; males are registered at 18 years of age; conscript service obligation - two years; 18 years of age for voluntary military service (2004)

Manpower available for military service:  
males age 21-49: 14,903,855
females age 21-49: 15,265,854 (2005 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:  
males age 21-49: 10,396,032
females age 21-49: 11,487,690 (2005 est.)

Manpower reaching military service age annually:  
males age 18-49: 526,276
females age 21-49: 514,396 (2005 est.)



Military expenditures - dollar figure:   
 \$1.775 billion (FY00)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP:   
 1.8% (2003)



Transnational Issues

Thailand

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Disputes - international:  
 separatist violence in Thailand's predominantly Muslim southern provinces prompt border closures and controls with Malaysia to stem terrorist activities; southeast Asian states have enhanced border surveillance to check the spread of avian flu; talks continue on completion of demarcation with Thailand but disputes remain over several areas along Mekong River and Thai squatters; despite continuing border committee talks, significant differences remain with Burma over boundary alignment and the handling of ethnic rebels, refugees, and illegal cross-border activities; Cambodia and Thailand dispute sections of boundary with missing boundary markers; Cambodia claims Thai encroachments into Cambodian territory and obstructing access to Preah Vihear temple ruins awarded to Cambodia by ICJ decision in 1962; ethnic Karens from Burma flee into Thailand - to escape fighting between Karen rebels and Burmese troops - resulting in Thailand sheltering about 120,000 Burmese refugees in 2005; Karens also protest Thai support for a Burmese hydroelectric dam construction on the Salween River near the border; environmentalists in Burma and Thailand remain concerned about China's construction of hydroelectric dams upstream on the Nujiang/Salween River in Yunnan Province

Refugees and internally displaced persons:  
refugees (country of origin): 120,814 (Burma)
IDPs: 6,000 (26 December 2004 tsunami) (2005)

Illicit drugs:  
 a minor producer of opium, heroin, and marijuana; illicit transit point for heroin en route to the international drug market from Burma and Laos; eradication efforts have reduced the area of cannabis cultivation and shifted some production to neighboring countries; opium poppy cultivation has been reduced by eradication efforts; also a drug money-laundering center; minor role in methamphetamine production for regional consumption; major consumer of methamphetamine since the 1990s

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