

PHUKET WEEKLY UPDATE

No109/30012026



Thailand Tourism Forum (TTF 2026) Thursday 22nd January at The Athenee Hotel, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Bangkok. "A World Of Change"

Here are a few images from the inspiring 15th edition of the Thailand Tourism Forum (TTF). It was wonderful to see such strong attendance, including so many from the Phuket Hotels Association. We'll certainly be registering early next time. Phuket Hotels Association is proud to support this event—congratulations to all involved, and thank you for delivering a truly first-class hospitality forum.

Just in case you missed this inspiring event- [HERE is the highlight video](#)



PATA & PHA Partner to Support Responsible Growth of Hospitality Sector

Pacific Asia Travel Association(PATA) and Phuket Hotels Association formalised a partnership last week, marking our shared goal to strengthen sustainable and responsible growth of the hospitality sector in Phuket and the wider region. We are excited for the opportunity to work closely with PATA moving forward!

Photo (L/R): Paul Pruangkarn, Director - Marketing & Communications, PATA; Noor Ahmad Hamid, Chief Executive Officer, PATA; Jayne MacDougall, Executive Director, PHA; and Bjorn Courage, General Manager, InterContinental Phuket Resort, and President, PHA.

Learn more about the agreement [HERE](#)

THIS WEEKS' NEWS UPDATE

THAILAND TOURISM AT A TIPPING POINT AS REGIONAL RIVALS SURGE, TTF 2026 WARNS

Thailand's tourism sector is at a critical turning point, industry leaders warned at Thailand Tourism Forum 2026 (TTF 2026), as regional rivals accelerate investment. While Thailand's international arrivals fell 7.2% in 2025, Vietnam grew by 20.4%, driven by stronger connectivity and aggressive infrastructure expansion, including new airports and rail projects. Bill Barnett of C9 Hotelworks said Thailand can no longer rely on past success, stressing that strategy now matters more than scale. Leaders called for urgent development of new destinations and experiences to capture higher-value demand, unlock regional diversity, strengthen resilience, and sustain long-term competitiveness as Asia's tourism landscape rapidly evolves.

For more information



THAILAND CONFIRMS NO NIPAH VIRUS CASES, STEPS UP AIRPORT SCREENING



Thailand's Ministry of Tourism and Sports has confirmed that no Nipah virus cases have been detected and that strict prevention measures are in place. Authorities are working with the Department of Disease Control, the Ministry of Public Health and immigration officials to enforce screening and quarantine at airports and disease control checkpoints. Measures include temperature checks, travel history assessments and rapid isolation of suspected cases in line with International Health Regulations. Thailand has strong laboratory capacity and a nationwide surveillance network. The ministry reassured travellers that Thailand remains a safe destination.

For more information

TAT POSITIONS THAILAND AS A REGIONAL MARINE TOURISM HUB

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is positioning Thailand as a regional marine tourism hub by leveraging the Thailand Boat Festival 2026 as a strategic platform for high-value tourism growth. Held in Phuket, the festival supports Thailand's shift from volume-driven tourism to experience-led, high-spending marine travel, including yachting and cruises. Central to this strategy is cooperation under the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), which aims to align standards, infrastructure and services across borders. By strengthening connectivity, workforce quality and sustainable practices, TAT seeks to deliver premium marine experiences while ensuring long-term economic and community benefits across the Andaman subregion.



For more information

THAILAND SEES RECORD HOTEL TRANSACTION VOLUMES IN 2025



Thailand's hotel investment market hit a record high in 2025, with transaction volumes reaching 26.4 billion baht (US\$845.6 million), according to data presented by JLL Hotels & Hospitality Group at Thailand Tourism Forum 2026. The figure more than doubled the 10-year average, highlighting strong resilience despite global economic headwinds. Bangkok dominated activity with 80% of total volume, while Phuket's share declined due to limited assets for sale. JLL noted rising deal sizes and a shift toward mixed-use developments, branded residences and hotel redevelopments. Although 2026 volumes are expected to moderate, investors continue to seek value in secondary markets and asset repositioning strategies.

For more information

THAILAND TOURISM MARKET UPDATE

Number of tourists 1-25 JAN 2026



Number of tourists (1-25 JAN 2026)
2,625,921 people
 -9.01% (YOY)

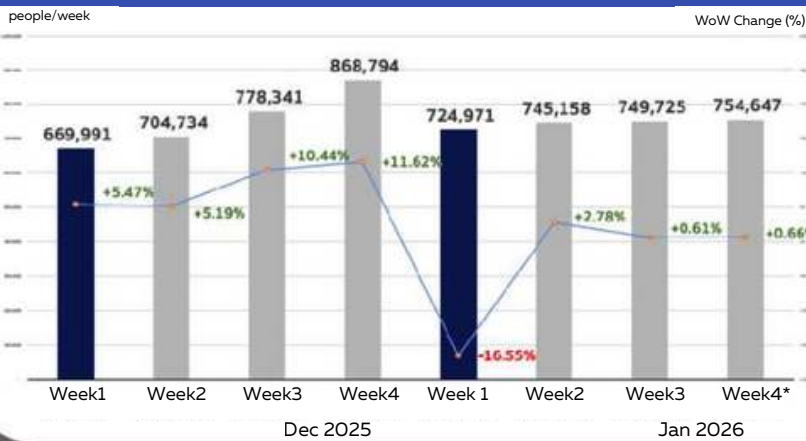
Top 5 number of tourists

Rank	Country	People
1	China	301,484
2	Malaysia	235,780
3	Russia	223,482
4	India	189,786
5	South Korea	136,939

IMPORTANT FACTORS DURING THE PAST WEEK

- (+) Recovery in short-haul travel demand, led by key markets including China, Malaysia, and India.
- (+) Peak tourism season and government “ease of travel” measures, improving convenience and accessibility for travel to Thailand.

Number of International Tourists: Weeks 1–4 of December 2025 to Week 4 of January 2026



Top 5 source markets in Week 4* of January 2026

1	China	stable	100,920 People	+14.21%
2	Malaysia	moved up from rank 3	61,897	+8.89%
3	India	stable	59,295	+11.80%
4	Russia	dropped from rank 2	54,552	-8.05%
5	South Korea	stable	40,591	-1.20%

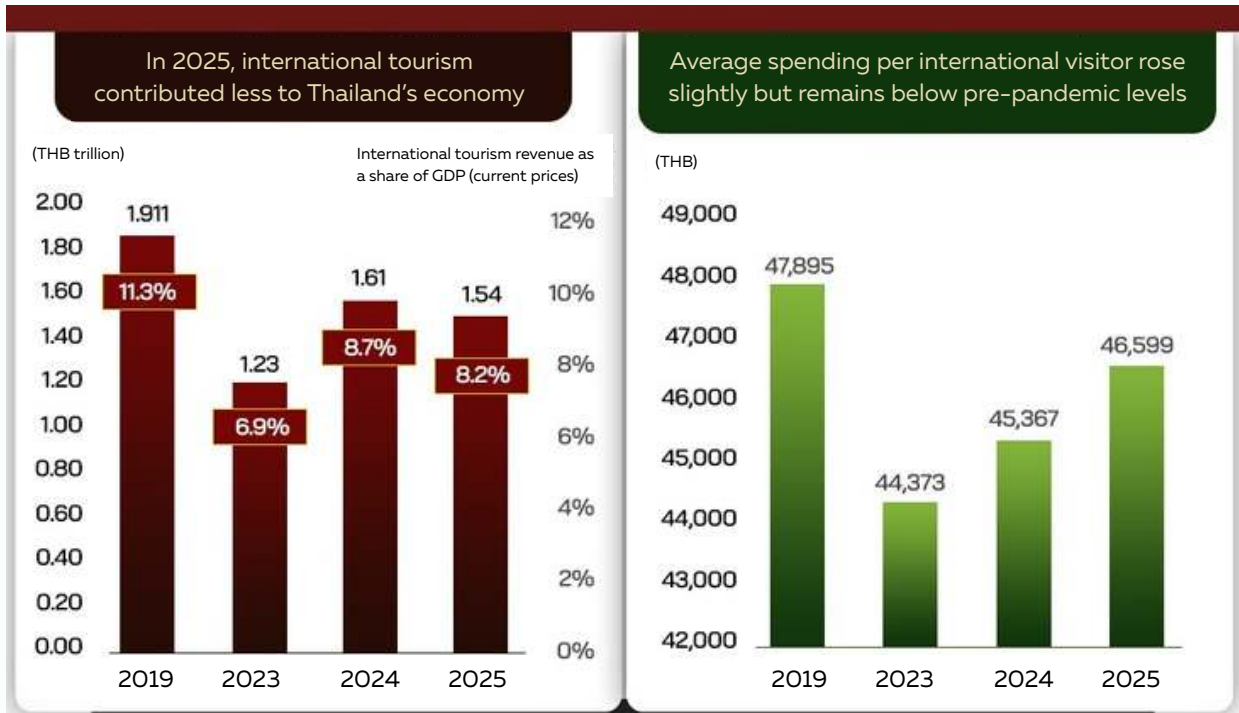
*Week 4 (this week) covers the period 19-25 January 2026

Source : Economics Tourism and Sports Division Information as of Jan 27, 2026

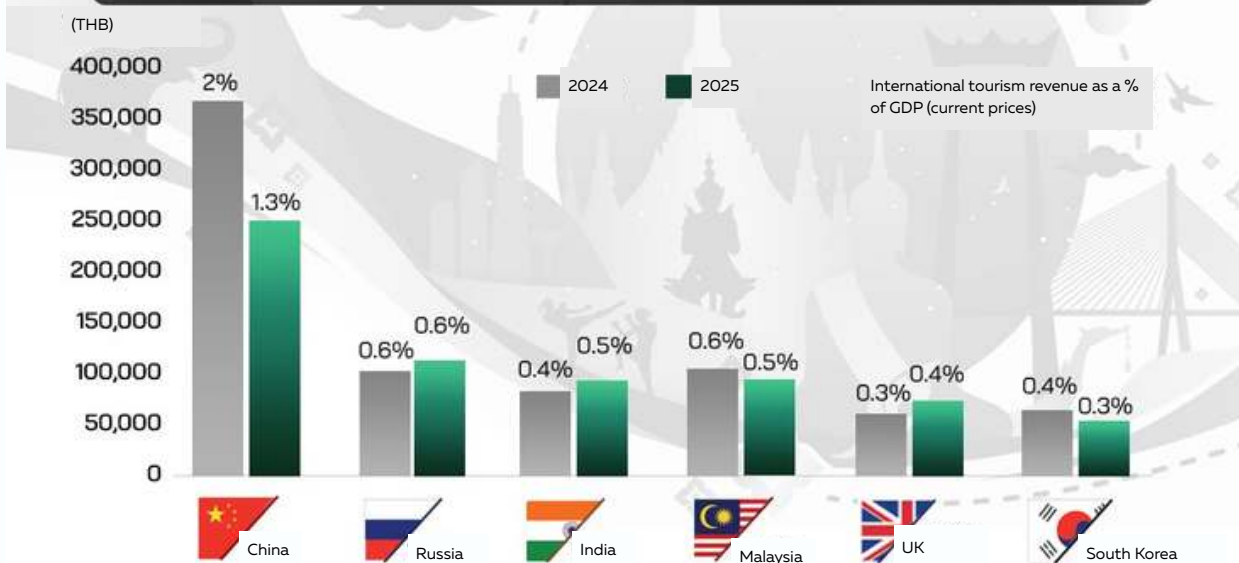
[For more information](#)

- Short-haul market momentum:** Short-haul demand continued to recover, led by China, Malaysia, and India, supported by peak season travel and government ease-of-travel measures.
- Overall arrivals:** International arrivals totaled 754,647 visitors, up 0.66% week-on-week, with average daily arrivals of 107,806.
- Top source markets:** The five largest markets were China (100,920), Malaysia (61,897), India (59,295), Russia (54,552), and South Korea (40,591). China, India, and Malaysia recorded week-on-week growth, while Russia and South Korea declined.
- Outlook:** Arrivals are expected to soften slightly next week, though supported by continued recovery in the China market, the Trusted Thailand safety initiative, ease-of-travel measures, visa exemptions, and ongoing airline capacity expansion.

Growth from Other Markets Cannot Fully Offset the Decline in Chinese Tourists



In 2025, revenue gains from Russian, Indian, UK, and other tourists remained insufficient to offset the decline in revenue from Chinese tourists.



Challenging Return of Chinese Tourists

Recovery of the Chinese market remains difficult. While short-term travel demand is supported by festive-season travel, competition across destinations remains intense.

2026 Outlook

International tourist arrivals to Thailand are projected to reach **34.1 million visitors**

Key Risks to Monitor

Geopolitical risks and external uncertainties, including:

- ▲ Iran-related tensions
- ▲ Nipah virus situation in India
- ▲ Greenland, global conflicts

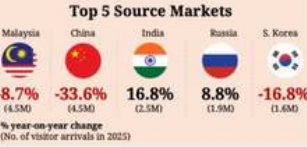
- **Tourism revenue:** In 2025, international tourism generated ~THB 1.54 trillion, equal to 8.2% of GDP, still below the 11.3% share in 2019.
- **China dependency:** Chinese visitors remained the largest revenue source (~THB 250bn), but gains from other markets have not offset the decline in China-related revenue.
- **Outlook & risks:** Chinese demand faces rising competition despite Chinese New Year support, while geopolitical tensions and health risks add uncertainty.

Source: MOTs and K Research



THAILAND TOURISM: A DEFINING NEXUS

THAILAND TOURISM 2025 SNAPSHOT



VIETNAM TOURISM MARKET

Vietnam International Airports



No. of International Flights per Day
 + New Airport

Registered Accommodation Establishments



Vietnam Hotel Average Rate



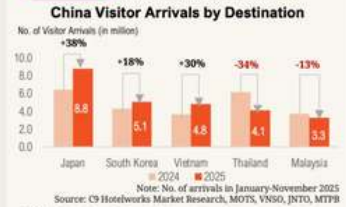
Key Infrastructure Projects

- International Airports**: 12 International airports in Vietnam with 1 airport to start operating in 2026
 - New HCMC Gateway Airport**: Long Thanh International Airport to commence operations in 2026 (capacity of 25M passengers; long-term target of 100M)
 - High-Speed Railway Project**: A 1,541-km long railway connecting Hanoi to HCMC to start construction in late 2026
- Source: Vietnam Airlines, C9 Hotelworks Market Research

CHINA TRAVEL TRENDS

China Outbound Travel

+6.2% Projected growth from 2024 (146M), bringing 2025 volume in line with the record high in 2019 (155M)



2026 Outlook for Thailand: China visitor arrivals are expected to rebound, supported by:

- Improved safety sentiment: Following scam hub demolition & border conflict de-escalation
- Diversion from Japan: Amid an official travel warning
- Ecosystem readiness & demand generators: Such as international concerts and events

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THAILAND TOURISM IN 2026

- Invest in strategic infrastructure:** To maintain regional competitiveness
 - Elevate safety standards:** To reassure international visitors
 - Promote 2nd & 3rd-tier destinations:** To respond to the global trend toward experiential travel
- Source: C9 Hotelworks Market Research

Thailand heads into 2026 at an inflection point: regional demand is rising, but Thailand is losing share as competitors accelerate. The gap is most pronounced in the China market—outbound travel is recovering, yet Thailand is underperforming as travelers pivot to destinations seen as safer, better connected, and better value, notably Vietnam. The divergence signals that leadership now depends less on scale and more on infrastructure, strategy, and ecosystem readiness.

Source: C9 Hotelworks
 Read full report [HERE](#)

USEFUL ARTICLES

ENGLISH

[Hotel Asset Management takes center stage in Thailand's Hotels & Hospitality Market](#)

[Tailored to Win: How Hotels are Using Localization to Capture Asia's Tourism Boom](#)

[Viet Nam emerges as one of Asia's must-visit destinations: Vogue](#)

THAI

[กกท. กางเหตุดังชาติเที่ยวไทย ติดลบ 10% ยันไวรัสชิคาโก ไม่ใช่ตัวการ](#)

[รายงานภาวะเศรษฐกิจการท่องเที่ยว ปีที่ 7 ฉบับที่ 1/2569](#)

[กกท.เตรียมเปิดตัว "ลิลชา ลิลชา" Amazing Thailand Ambassador](#)

Information sources

- <https://www.bangkokpost.com/>
- https://www.facebook.com/ETSMOTS?locale=th_TH
- IHA
- IAT
- THE.Nation

Disclaimer: members should seek and consult their lawyers / accountants / advisors accordingly and not rely only on the provided information as the information given is only for educational purposes and information as received from a third party.

ABOUT US

"The Phuket Hotels Association is a nonprofit organisation comprising a broad spectrum of hotels"

Phuket Hotels Association Leadership Team

Bjorn Courage	President
Daniel Muery	Director, Secretary - General
Brett Wilson	Director, Treasurer
Christoph Weidemann	Director, Vice President

Phuket Hotels Association Core Team

Jayne MacDougall	Executive Director
Sulaiya Ritto	Administrative Manager
Wanwisa Chunuansri	Asst. Administrative Manager
Nuthamat Phetsawee	Event Support

Advisory Board

Bill Barnett
Sumi Soorian
Boon Yongsakul
Sears Jivavisitnont
Eric Ricaurte
Sukhchaensingh (Sam) Sethi
David Johnson
Michael Massey

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Vincent Delsol
Mongkudh Makaramanee
Kanokwan Homcha-aim

Group Director Human Resources, Thavorn Hotels
General Manager, Pullman Phuket Panwa Beach Resort
Anona Beachfront Phuket Resort
Cluster Sustainability Manager, Anantara

Education Committee

(Chair) Bart Callens
Julian Lowry
Pathama Kanteetaw
Jirarat Ninpradub (Pui)

General Manager, SAii Laguna Phuket
General Manager Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort
Executive Assistant Manager, Paresa Resort
General Manager, Le Meridien Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort

Government Liaison Committee

Wasan Keatkaew

Hotel Manager, MSocial Hotel Phuket

Destination Marketing Committee

(Chair) Pimpisa Sukpasert
David Barrett
Dhapat Chotiratnarakool
Natthawadee Wongpanya

Director of Marketing and Communication, Pullman Phuket Panwa Beach Resort
Event Consultant, The Slate
Social Media & Partnership Manager, The Pavilions Phuket
MarCom Manager, Hyatt Regency Phuket Resort

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(Co-Chair) Pannaphat Lapa
Logan Daley
Serge Cuypers
Christoph Weidemann
Levent Bilgir

General Manager, The Slate
Resort Manager, V Villas Phuket
General Manager, Angsana Laguna Phuket
General Manager, Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas
General Manager, Doubletree by Hilton Phuket Banthai Resort

Affiliate Ambassador

Patrik Ilstam

Eden Beach Resort and Spa , Ocean Breeze Resort Khao Lak

Members


9 Hornbills Tented Camp, Absolute Twin Sands Resort & Spa, Amanpuri, Amari Phuket, Amora Beach Resort Phuket, Anantara Layan Phuket Resort, Anantara Koh Yao Yai Resort & Villas, Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas, Anantara Vacation Club Mai Khao Phuket, Andara Resort & Villas, Angsana Laguna Phuket, Anona Beachfront Phuket Resort, Avista Grand Phuket Karon - Mgallery, Baan Laimai, Baan Yin Dee Boutique Resort, Banyan Tree Phuket, Barceló Coconut Island, Best Western Phuket, Burasari Phuket, Casa Del M Resort, Cassia Phuket, Centara Grand Beach Resort Phuket, Centara Karon Resort Phuket, Chanalai Flora Resort, Club Bamboo Boutique Patong Beach Resort, COMO Point Yamu, Courtyard Marriott Phuket Town, Dewa Phuket Resort and Villas, DoubleTree by Hilton Phuket Banthai Resort, Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket, Fisherman Way Beach Resort, Four Points by Sheraton Phuket, Patong Beach, GLOW Mira Karon Beach, Hilton Garden Inn Phuket Bangtao, Holiday Inn Resort Phuket Patong, HOMA, Homm Bliss Southbeach Patong, Hotel Clover Patong, Hyatt Regency Phuket Resort, InterContinental Phuket Resort, Island Escape by Burasari, JonoX Phuket Karon Hotel, JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa, Kata Rocks Resort & Residences, Keemala Phuket, Koyao Island Resort, Kudo Hotel Patong, La Green Hotel & Residence, Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort, Le Meridien Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort, Maikhao Dream Villa Resort & Spa, Centara Boutique Collection, Mangosteen Ayurveda & Wellness Resort, Marriott's Mai Khao Resort, Meliá Phuket, Karon Residences, Meliá Phuket Mai Khao, MontAzure Resort Phuket - MGallery Collection, Movenpick Resort Bangtao Beach Phuket, M SOCIAL Hotel Phuket, My Beach Hotel, Naiyang Beach Resort and Spa, NH Boat Lagoon Resort, Noku Phuket, Nonnee Kata Beach Phuket, Novotel Phuket Kamala Beach, Outrigger Surin Beach Resort, Paresa Resort, Phuket Graceland Resort & Spa, Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa, Merlin Beach, Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa, Nai Yang Beach, Pullman Phuket Arcadia Karon Beach Resort, Proud Phuket, Pullman Phuket Arcadia Naithon Beach, Pullman Phuket Panwa Beach Resort, Rayaburi Hotel Patong, Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa, Rosewood Phuket, SAii Laguna Phuket, SALA Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort, Selina Serenity Rawai Phuket, Six Senses Yao Noi, Sole Mio Boutique Hotel & Wellness, Stay Wellbeing & Lifestyle Resort, Thanyapura Sports Hotel, Thavorn Beach Village Resort and Spa, Thavorn Palm Beach Resort, The Bell Pool Villa Resort, The Boathouse Phuket, Kora Beach Resort, The Kee Resort and Spa, The Nai Harn, The Naka Island, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Phuket, The Pavilions Phuket, The Seaton House Phuket, The Shore at Katathani, The Slate, Phuket, The Westin Siray Bay Resort & Spa, Phuket, Tree House Villas Koh Yao, Trisara, Twinpalms MontAzure, Twinpalms Phuket, V Villas Phuket, Villa PhuKhao, Wyndham Grand Nai Harn Beach Phuket, Wyndham Grand Phuket Kalim Bay

Affiliates

Eden Beach Resort and Spa , Ocean Breeze Resort Khao Lak , Iniala Beach House, Khao Lak Marriott Beach Resort & Spa, JW Marriott Khao Lak Resort & Spa, Avani+ Khao Lak Resort



CONTACT US

 076 619 518

 info@phukethotelsassociation.com