

# PHUKET WEEKLY UPDATE

No107/16012026



## Top Search Destinations for 2026

These are most-searched travel destinations for 2026 according to eDreams ODIGEO's data

Rank	City
1	Bangkok
2	Tokyo
3	Paris
4	London
5	New York City
6	Phuket
7	Frankfurt
8	Bali
9	Rome
10	Madrid



THE RANKINGS

According to global booking platform eDreams ODIGEO, Bangkok has been ranked the world's most searched and planned travel destination for 2026, while Phuket secured 6th place globally, underscoring strong international demand and a positive outlook for Thailand's tourism sector.

## THIS WEEKS' NEWS UPDATE

### POLITICS ADDRESSES TOURISM ROADBLOCKS

As Thailand heads toward a general election, political parties are proposing tourism policies to revive economic growth amid slowing arrivals and revenues. While tourism fell 7.23% in 2025 to around 33 million visitors, the sector remains critical, having contributed 17% of GDP pre-pandemic. Industry voices warn that short-term stimulus alone is insufficient, highlighting structural issues such as revenue concentration in major provinces, overreliance on natural attractions, foreign nominee businesses, corruption, and weak infrastructure links to secondary cities. Proposed solutions include investing in man-made attractions, expanding tourism to secondary provinces, improving transparency, upgrading transport and skills, and shifting focus toward higher spending per visitor to ensure more balanced, sustainable tourism growth.

**[For more information](#)**

### TAT BANKING ON NEW CAMPAIGNS



The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) aims to restore tourism revenue to THB 3 trillion this year, driven by 36.7 million foreign arrivals and 210 million domestic trips. While short-haul visitors are expected to account for 70% of arrivals, long-haul markets are projected to generate up to 45% of total tourism revenue. Growth will be supported by expanded international flight services, new market segments, and the global "Amazing Thailand Ambassador" campaign, alongside a year-round calendar of festivals, wellness tourism, night-time travel, and targeted promotions across key source markets, while carefully monitoring geopolitical, safety, and economic risks.

**[For more information](#)**

### PHUKET NIGHTSPOT OPERATORS WANT CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL OPERATIONS

Following the resurfacing of a bribery case involving entertainment operators in Phuket, the private sector has urged authorities to crack down on illegal nightlife operations and unlicensed accommodations, which damage the island's reputation and reduce tax revenue. Industry representatives highlight weak law enforcement and complex licensing processes as root causes, noting that some operators choose to violate regulations and pay bribes to extend operating hours. Calls have been made for stricter enforcement alongside streamlined licensing procedures to encourage legal compliance, improve governance, restore tourism confidence, and support sustainable growth, particularly as foreign visitor spending remains subdued despite the high season.



**[For more information](#)**

### THAILAND EYES DISNEYLAND-STYLE THEME PARK IN EEC TO BOOST MEGA PROJECTS

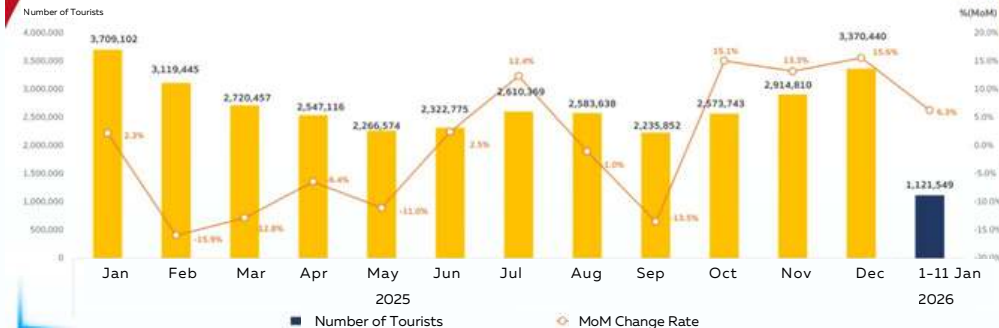


Thailand is exploring the possibility of attracting a Disneyland theme park to the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) as a major tourism "magnet project," following repeated signals from Deputy Prime Minister and Transport Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn. The proposal is positioned as a catalyst to support stalled infrastructure investments, including the high-speed rail linking three airports and the U-Tapao-Eastern Aviation City development. Authorities have tasked the EECO with designing incentives and identifying suitable land—estimated at 144–480 hectares—to attract a globally recognised theme park brand, aiming to boost year-round tourism, strengthen the EEC's appeal, and position Thailand as home to Asia's fifth Disneyland.

**[For more information](#)**

# THAILAND TOURISM MARKET UPDATE

## Number of tourists 1-11 JAN 2026



**Number of tourists (1-11 JAN 2026)**  
**1,121,549 people**  
 -7.02% (YOY)

**Top 5 number of tourists**

Rank	Country	People
1	Malaysia	117,039
2	China	112,204
3	Russia	109,600
4	India	77,455
5	South Korea	55,262

### IMPORTANT FACTORS DURING THE PAST WEEK

- (+) Recovery in tourist travel across all market segments.
- (+) The current high tourism season.
- (+) Government "Ease of Traveling" measures facilitating entry into Thailand.

### Number of International Tourists: Weeks 1-4 of December 2025 to Week 2 of January 2026



### Top 5 source markets in Week 2\* of January 2026

Rank	Country	People	WoW Change (%)
1	China	81,863	+24.07%
2	Russia	67,839	-3.89%
3	Malaysia	66,495	-26.49%
4	India	52,570	+8.20%
5	South Korea	39,327	+46.70%

\*Week 2 (this week) covers the period 5-11 January 2026

Source : Economics Tourism and Sports Division Information as of Jan 13, 2026

[For more information](#)

- In early 2026 (1-11 Jan):** Thailand welcomed a cumulative 1.12 million international visitors, generating approximately THB 55.0 billion in tourism revenue.
- This week\*:** International arrivals totalled 745,158 visitors, up 2.78% week-on-week, reflecting a recovery across most markets, with average daily arrivals of 106,451.
- Key source markets this week:** China (81,863), Russia (67,839), Malaysia (66,495), India (52,570), and South Korea (39,327). South Korea, China, and India recorded strong week-on-week growth, while Malaysia and Russia softened.
- Next week (outlook):** Arrivals are expected to ease slightly, though demand should remain supported by the European and American high season and continued efforts to expand airline capacity.

# Thai Tourism Trends – International Market (January 2026 Edition)

**Happy New Year**

**International Tourist Arrivals**

**3 million people** (-18%) compared to Jan 2025

Average daily international tourists: 101,000 people

Note: Jan 2026 international arrivals are estimated using historical travel patterns and airline seat capacity data from TAT's Marketing Strategy Department.

**TOP5 Tourist Arrivals** (...% Share)

Short-Haul (55%)			Long-Haul (45%)		
China	336,000	-49%	Russia	257,000	+0.4%
Malaysia	241,000	-46%	UK	123,000	+1%
India	194,000	+4%	USA	120,000	+2%
Korea	181,000	-13%	Germany	116,000	+3%
Laos	93,000	-1%	France	112,000	+1%

Note: % growth compared to Jan 2025

**Forward Booking – January 2026**

**Overall flight forward bookings to Thailand**

**-3%** compared to Jan 2025

**Top 5 Markets with Highest Booking Growth**

- ISRAEL +39%
- U.S.A. +21%
- Switzerland +19%
- Denmark +14%
- Russia +13%

Data Source: Forwardkeys, 22 Dec 2025

**Share of Forward Bookings (%)**

**13 New International Routes to Thailand**

**Short-haul (10 routes)**

- China: 2 routes
- India: 1 route
- Bhutan: 1 route
- Korea: 3 routes
- Taiwan: 1 route
- Vietnam: 1 route
- Singapore: 1 route

**Long-haul (2 routes)**

- Belarus 2 routes
- Poland 1 route

**Destinations include** Bangkok, Phuket, Krabi, Chiang Mai, U-Tapao.

Note: New flight routes in Jan 2026 compared with Dec 2025 (ForwardKeys data as of 22 Dec 2025)

**Seat Capacity Recovery Recovered to 89%**

**Total seats: 4.6M**

**(-3% YoY) compared to Jan 2025**

Prepared by the International Market Analysis Unit, TAT Marketing Strategy Department. Date: 25 Dec 2025

## Factors Influencing International Tourist Travel – January 2026 Edition

**Supporting Factors**

**Travel Trends 2026 – Where & Why People Travel**

- Travel as Expression: Travel driven by self-identity and social media sharing
- Travel with Purpose: Meaningful travel supporting local communities
- Travel to Heal: Focus on wellness, balance, and quality of life
- Travel to Connect: Travel with friends, families, and special-interest groups
- Travel of Tomorrow: Technology-driven travel, especially among Gen Z
- Aligned with Trip.com Group and Google travel trend insights

**Global Media Exposure**

- CNN named Thailand among Asia-Pacific destinations to watch, highlighting cultural identity, gastronomy, and Thailand's tourism potential
- Reinforces Thailand's image as a global countdown destination into 2026

**Challenging Factors**

**Border Tensions (Thailand–Cambodia)**

- Trip cancellations reported for border destinations such as Koh Chang and Koh Mak
- Heightened safety concerns affecting MICE and group tours, particularly from China
- Travel advisories issued for 7 border provinces, affecting travellers from 34 countries

**Forward Booking Trends**

- Forward bookings for Jan–Feb 2026 show mixed signals, ranging from -2% to +4%, down from pre-incident growth of +4% to +5%
- Reflects hesitation among tourists unable to finalise travel plans

**Regional Competition During New Year Period**

- Japan: Add-on free flights and stopover promotions encouraging regional travel
- South Korea: Korea Grand Sale 2026 boosting post-holiday travel demand
- Singapore: Positioning as an urban entertainment hub through global concerts, K-pop events, and cultural festivals targeting Gen Z travellers

Source: TAT Marketing Strategy Department

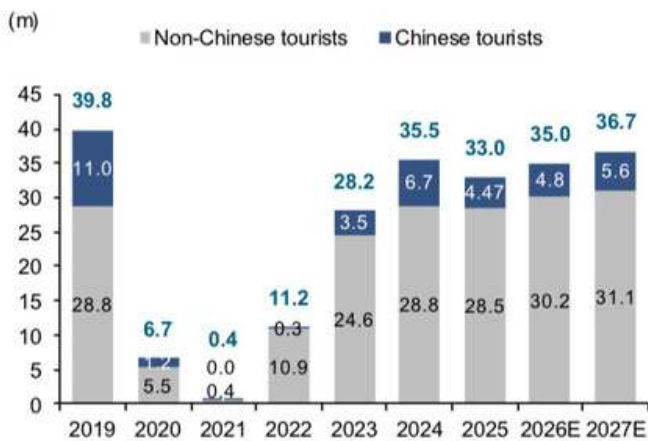
## International visitors to rebound in 2026

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports reported full-year 2025 international arrivals of 32.97m (-7% y-y). The top source markets were Malaysia (4.52m; -9% y-y; 14% mix), China (4.47m; -34% y-y; 14% mix), India (2.49m; +17% y-y; 8% mix), Russia (1.90m; +9% y-y; 6% mix), and South Korea (1.56m; -17% y-y; 5% mix). Arrivals from non-China markets totaled 28.50m, down only 1% y-y, underscoring the resilience of non-China demand.

International arrivals for Dec-2025 reached 3.37m (+16% m-m, -7% y-y), c4% above our estimate of 3.24m. This comprised of 0.37m Chinese visitors (+14% m-m, -30% y-y) and 3.00m non-China visitors (+16% m-m, -3% y-y). For 4Q25, total international arrivals were 8.86m (+19% q-q, -6% y-y), including 1.06m from China (-8% q-q, -29% y-y) and 7.80m from non-China markets (+24% q-q, -2% y-y).

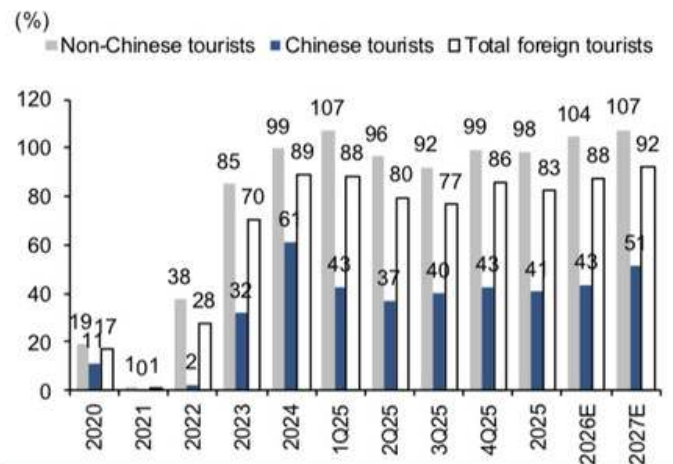
Domestic tourism remained solid, with 202.37m trips in 2025 (+3% y-y). Thailand generated THB2.70t in total tourism receipts for the year (-1% y-y), accounting for c14% of GDP, comprising THB1.54t from foreign tourists (-5% y-y) and THB1.17t from domestic tourists (+4% y-y).

**Exhibit 1: Thailand's tourist arrivals by nationality, yearly**



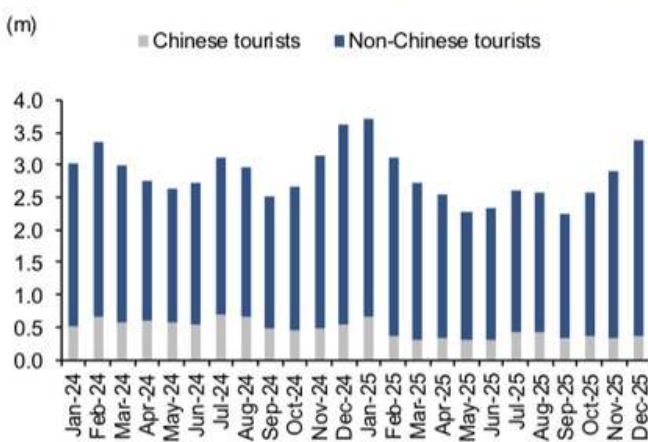
Sources: Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS); FSSIA estimates

**Exhibit 2: % of tourists by source market to 2019 levels**



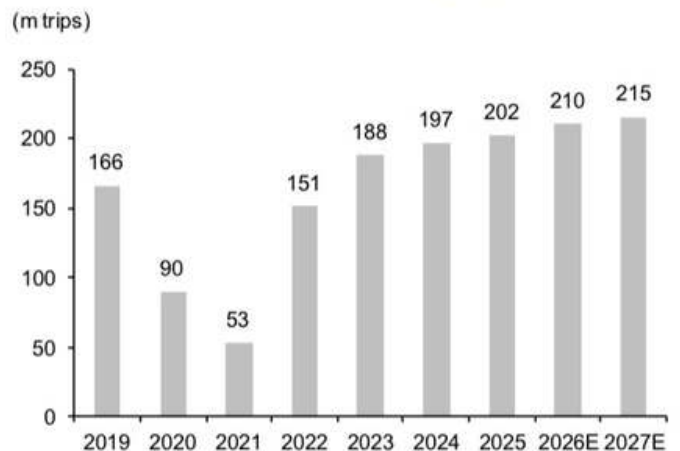
Sources: MOTS; FSSIA estimates

**Exhibit 3: Thailand tourist arrivals by nationality, monthly**



Sources: MOTS; FSSIA's compilation

**Exhibit 4: Thailand domestic tourists, yearly**

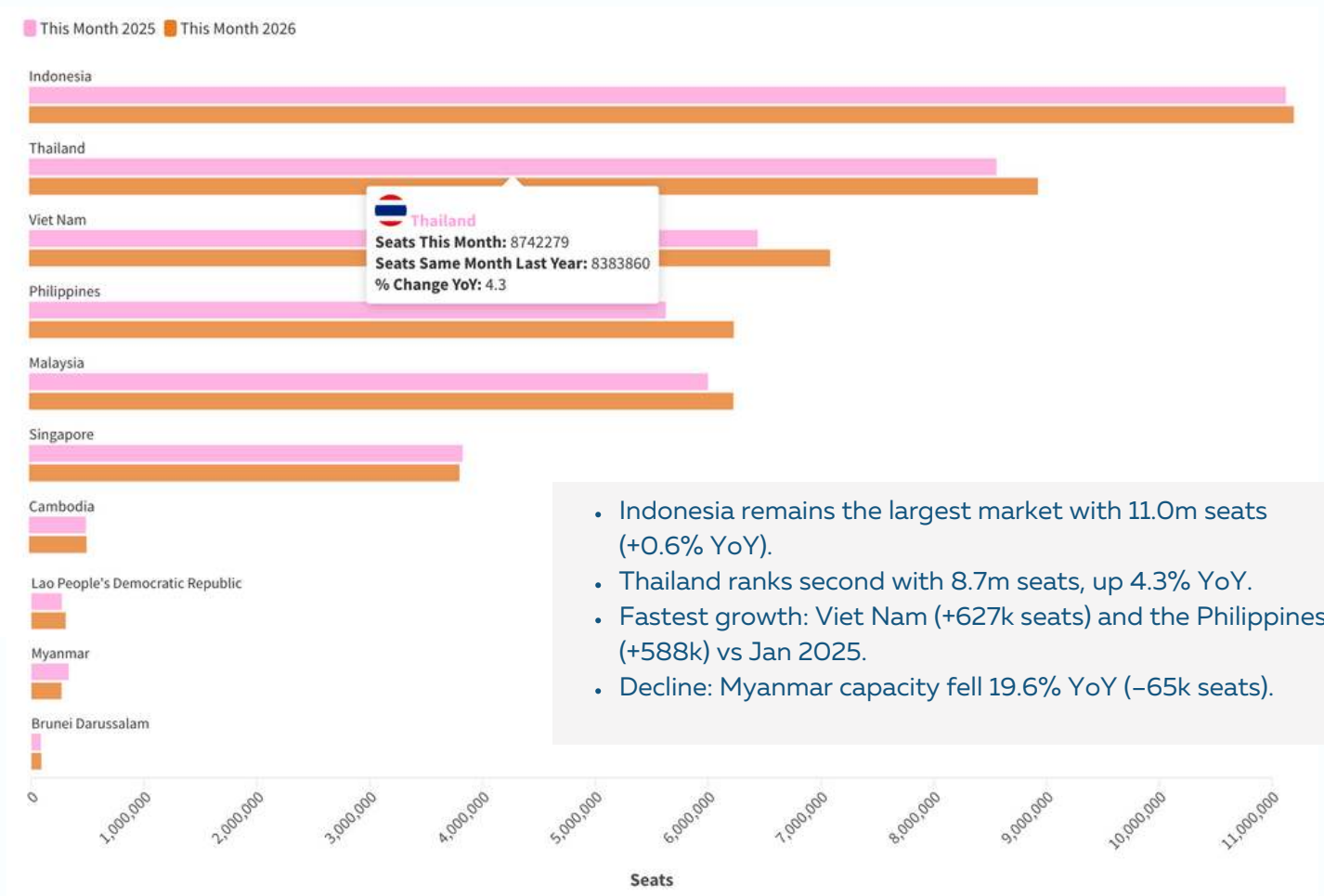


Sources: MOTS; FSSIA estimates

Read Full report click [HERE](#)

Source: FSS International Investment Advisory.

## WHICH SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRY HAS THE MOST AIRLINE CAPACITY (DOMESTIC + INTERNATIONAL)?



Source: OAG

### USEFUL ARTICLES

#### ENGLISH

[Travel Trends 2026](#)

[Minor Hotels Travel Trends Report 2026](#)

[Travel Trends 2026](#)

#### THAI

[สอง 3 โฮลดิ้ง ‘ท่องเที่ยวไทย’ ปี 2569 แคมเปญ ‘ลิซ่า’ โปรโมต - อีเวนต์ปลุกสีสัน ไทยทัวริสต์ต่างชาติ](#)

[ททท. จับมือยักษ์จีน Tencent ดันวาไรตี้กระตุ้นรายได้ 2.6 แสนล้าน](#)

[ททท.เปิดตัว “ลิซ่า” บังแก่น Amazing Thailand Ambassador เตรียมสะกดสายตาทั่วโลก](#)

### Information sources

- <https://www.bangkokpost.com/>
- [https://www.facebook.com/ETSMOTS?locale=th\\_TH](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

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Sulaiya Ritto	Administrative Manager
Wanwisa Chunuansri	Asst. Administrative Manager
Nuthamat Phetsawee	Event Support

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Hotel Manager, MSocial Hotel Phuket

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Resort Manager, V Villas Phuket  
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General Manager, Doubletree by Hilton Phuket Banthai Resort

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Patrik Ilstam

Eden Beach Resort and Spa , Ocean Breeze Resort Khao Lak

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## 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



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