

Sample Travel Article

Wat Po and the Grand Palace by Riverboat

Although there are plenty of tourist attractions and sites of historical interest to be found scattered around Bangkok, the two that should be on every visitors must see list are the Grand Palace and Wat Po. It is possible to visit both of these historical sites by either taxi or tuk-tuk, but the best way to enjoy them is to make a day of it, and travel between the many different sites that these two attractions comprise of by river boat.

Why Travel by River Boat?

To experience both the Grand Palace and Wat Po in their entirety, you will also need to visit several smaller sites of interest, which are associated with the two main sites. All of these places are situated on or close to the Chao Praya River. It is possible to buy a day ticket for the public riverboat. This boat acts much like a bus, allowing you to hop on and off as often as you please, stopping at each site along the river. Additionally, a small guide book which is provided allows you to decide where you need to get on and off, and these stops are announced in English as the boat approaches them. This makes travelling between sites very easy.

Departure Location

The best place to start your river tour of the Grand Palace and Wat Po is from the small wharf close to the Taksin Bridge Skytrain Station. The Skytrain is a public transport network which covers most of Bangkok. Regardless of where you are staying there should be a Skytrain station close by. Once you get off of the Skytrain, head down the stairs and under the station. You will see the river in front of you and a handful of ticket booths as well as some food stalls. You need to locate the ticket booth which is selling tickets for the Chao Praya Tourist Boat. This service is specially designed to help people who do not speak Thai enjoy the river.

Stops of Interest along the Route

There are several stops which are of interest to tourists along the route taken by the Chao Praya Tourist Boat, and these are:

- Wat Po – The actual temple is more correctly named Wat Phra Chetuphon, although the temple itself only takes up some of the area which has come to be known collectively as Wat Po. Other notable sites of interest within Wat Po include the statue of the reclining Buddha, and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. This is quite a large site, and takes a while to walk around and explore. For a real taste of Thailand then head inside the Wat and have yourself blessed by a Buddhist Monk.

- Grand Palace – The Grand palace which is attached to Wat Phra Kaow, was the original royal residence in Bangkok. The palace is no longer used in this way, apart from on special ceremonial occasions. Some of the highlights of a visit to the Grand palace are the Boromabiman Hall which was the original royal residence, Dusit Hall which is possibly the best surviving example of traditional Thai architecture and the museum, which contains an accurate scale model of the entire site.
- Wat Arun – Wat Arun, the Temple of the Dawn, is much smaller than Wat Po but still well worth a visit. Wat Arun is located on the opposite side of the Chao Praya River to Wat Po, a little further downstream. Visiting this temple requires a short ferry ride across the river from the Chao Praya Tourist Boat stop.

Visiting these historic sites by river boat is a great way for families to spend a day exploring ancient Bangkok. These are all quite large sites, which can be tiring to explore in full. The time you spend on the river boat travelling between them is a welcome rest.