



Bangkok

Hot Spots to Shop



Wendy Johnson McFarlane

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Hot Spots to Shop Bangkok

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As is the case in cities throughout the world, changes occur from time to time in relation to commercial outlets and tourist venues. If in doubt, we suggest you either phone first or check with your hotel regarding location, opening hours and availability of credit card facilities.

THANK YOU

My sincere thanks to my husband Bruce, my mother Shirley, my son Ben, my daughter Zoë and her husband Ben who never asked why or how, just when. Also to Ella and Sebastian who opened my eyes to a whole new world of children's clothes and toys.

Thanks to all my shopping friends who were always up for one more shopping trip and one more shop in the name of research.

Thank you to all the friends and colleagues who suggested shops or places in Bangkok to visit.

TUK TUKS

These three-wheeled motor vehicles are supposedly cheaper than a metered taxi, and certainly gives a whole new meaning to the terms ‘open top’ and ‘fresh air’. They might be great to try once as a fun thing, or for a short trip, but they’re far from ideal if you need to travel a distance. I have found that they are often more expensive than a taxi.

MOTOR BIKES

On many of Bangkok’s street corners, you will see riders wearing brightly coloured vests waiting hopefully with their bikes. You can generally negotiate a very cheap price for these riders to take you to your destination, but I must confess I have never had the courage to try it. I am not sure my medical insurance or my nerves are up to it; just check your travel insurance as most policies do not cover motor bikes. I always shudder when I see a local family of six crammed onto one small motor bike.

BOATS

Klongs are the canals that, together with the Chao Phraya River, meander throughout Bangkok. Small boats are available for hire at major riverside hotels,

FABRIC & TEXTILES

The Thai silk industry was revived about 40 years ago by the legendary Jim Thompson, and is now world famous. A visit to one of the Jim Thompson shops is well worthwhile, and there is also a factory outlet, a favourite with bargain hunters, plus Jim Thompson House is a wonderful way to learn more about the country's history.

Queen Sirikit has fostered the industry through the Support Foundation, attracting the recognition of leading international designers such as Australia's Liz Davenport.

Thai silk is heavier and courser than Chinese silk, and comes in various weights and weaves in an array of bright colours. More recent designs have introduced some more sober colours into the range. It is used for both furniture and clothing and comes in anything from 1 to 12 ply, and in varying yarn types. Always ensure you are comparing like with like when evaluating prices.

Thai silk looks brilliant made up into evening wear. The colours are invariably bright, and the designs are usually plain or checks, with a few floral patterns. I find this material looks better in simple but sophisticated designs; it does not suit fastidious

THONG SENG LP

95/5 Nares Road, Bangrak

Phone 02/234 8092, 02-234 1559, 02-234 3649

Fax 02-236 1479

Email buntoon@gmail.com

Hours Mon-Sat 9am-5pm

BTS Sala Daeng then walk to Surawong Road

Payment Amex, Visa, MC

Exporter of exclusive silk fabrics but sells overruns from this shop at better prices than you will pay elsewhere. The staff are very helpful and their spoken English is excellent.

PAYA

203 Soi Thong Lo 10, Sukhumvit Road Soi 58

Phone/Fax 02-711 4457, 02-392 0728

Email payashop@yahoo.com

Hours Mon-Sat 10am-6pm

BTS Thong Lo

Payment Visa, MC, Amex

Good selection of cotton upholstery fabrics as well as ready-made items such as cushions and placemats. They also do custom-made solid wood furniture. I love the deckchair covers and also the lampshades. They will make up your own design and can arrange shipping.

VERTIGO GRILL & MOON BAR

21/100 Sathorn Road

Phone 02-679 1200

Fax 02-679 1199

Email bangkok@banyantree.com

Web www.banyantree.com

Hours Restaurant – Daily 6.30pm-10.30pm

Bar – Daily 5pm-1am

Payment Visa

This is another opportunity to dress up and enjoy views of Bangkok that will give you an appreciation of just how large the city is. Steve and Annie told me about this one, which goes to prove even people who are not keen on heights can enjoy the superb views of Bangkok.

Afternoon Tea

There are some wonderful places to have afternoon tea in Bangkok. My favourite will always be the Oriental Hotel; however, you can try most of the five-star hotels, Jim Thompson House or China House. Many serve special teas such as lemon grass, or refreshing drinks or juices such as watermelon with ginger.