

# Bangkok & the Beaches Handbook (Footprint - Travel Guides)

Joshua Eliot, Jane Bickersteth



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## Bangkok & the Beaches Handbook (Footprint - Travel Guides)

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Bangkok & the Beaches Handbook (Footprint - Travel Guides) Joshua Eliot, Jane Bickersteth Thailand is an Asian cliché. Exotic, inscrutable, hot, Oriental, delicate, sumptuous... Take the first few hours of an average visitor's arrival in Bangkok. Off the plane and into a gleaming new airport terminal. Lilting Thai voices, and a strange alphabet. Into the city along an elevated highway in the company of an apparently deranged taxi driver with a magic diagram inscribed on the roof of his car, a picture of a long-dead king lodged reverently in the tachometer, a cheap gold Buddha glued to the top of the dashboard, and a garland of plastic frangipani hanging from the rear-view mirror. Out of the taxi and into a quiet, cool hotel with copies of the Asian Wall Street Journal artfully arranged in reception and CNN in the bedrooms. Or into a small guesthouse run by a Thai bobbing to Bob Marley and offering sweltering rooms the size of chicken coops for the price of a dozen eggs.

While most people do touch base in effervescent Bangkok, and some grow to love the city, for many it is just a means to an end, a way station en route to the islands, beaches and towns of the south. With 2,614 km of coastline, there's a lot of potential. But, while many come to Thailand in search of a simple hut on a quiet beach, the challenge is to find one before the next person - or the next 10,000 people - get there. The pace of change is sometimes bewildering. Bear in mind that in the early 1970s Phuket was a forgotten backwater. But it is still possible to find simple bungalow accommodation for a couple of dollars a night, and probably a quiet beach, clear waters and an empty hammock.



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