

BANG PA-IN PALACE

By Vanseven Co.,Ltd.



ATTRACTION DETAILS

Few miles down the Chao Phraya River finds Bang Pa-in Palace, a complex of royal residences first built in around the 17th century to serve as a summer palace of Ayutthaya kings. It was later abandoned and ruined until King Mongkut (Rama IV) restored the complex. Most of the buildings we see today were ordered to build during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), who regularly spent his summers here with his royal consorts. Each building features different architectural style: for example Wehat Chamroon Palace, the only royal residence currently open to public, was built in a traditional Chinese style with materials imported from China while Aisawan Tippaya Asna Pavilion set in the middle of the lake features traditional Thai style embedded with colorful glass mosaics. On the other side finds a monument of Queen Sunanta, King Rama V's royal consort, and their son who were died in a boat accident. Bang Pa-in Palace is, slightly similar to the Grand Palace, divided into two zones: the outer zone for royal ceremonies and the inner zone that is reserved only for the king, his consorts and their small children.

Places of interest in outer zone:

Ho Hemmonthian Thewarat is the stone Prang (pagoda) under a banyan tree near the pond within the outer part of the royal court, where an image of a deity is housed. King Rama V ordered its construction in 1879 to replace an old shrine built by villagers as an offering to King Prasatthong of the Ayutthaya period.

Aisawanthipphaya-At Pavilion A Thai design pavilion in the middle of the pond was built in the reign of King Rama V. Originally built of wood throughout, King Rama VI commanded to change the floor and pillars to be reinforced concrete.

Warophatphiman Hall was formerly a two-story wooden villa served as a royal living quarter and throne hall. Later during his reign, King Rama V ordered the reconstruction, replacing with a European-style to serve as a throne hall for royal ceremonies.

Saphakhan Ratchaprayun. This two-storey building was a resident of relatives of the king and non-consort members and is now an exhibition hall displaying the history of Bang Pa-in Palace.

Places of interest in inner zone:

Phra Thinang Utthayan Phumisathian is a 2-story, pink-colored, Victorian style mansion serving as a residence for members of the royal family and their guests. The only mansion in Bang Pa-in Palace that is not open to public, this building is actually a new building ordered a construction by HM Queen Sirikit in 1938 to replace the old one, which was made of wood in Swiss chalet style and was burnt down in a fire accident.

Wehat Chamrun Hall was the latest mansion during the reign of King Rama V, built in 1889 as the royal offering by the wealthy Chinese merchants led by Phraya Choduk Ratchasetthi (Fak). The mansion was crafted in traditional Chinese Emperor style and was used as a royal residence for King Rama V, his queen and their son, King Rama VI during a royal visit in the cool.

Ho Witthunthassana: This three-storey, tower-style building was used as the view spot to see the royal elephants and the surrounding area.

WAT PHANANCHOENG

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ATTRACTION DETAILS

Wat Phanan Choeng Worawiharn is located in Khlong Suan Plu subdistrict, on the south bank Of Pasak River opposite the main city. From Wat Yai Chai Monkon, make a left turn and keep going for a kilometer, you will find Wat Phanan Choeng on your right.

Although Wat Phanan Choeng has been built even before the establishment of Ayutthaya as the capital city, there is no clear record about its founder. According to the Northern Chronicles, Phra Chao Sai Namphung, the ruler of Ayotthaya, had it built at the royal cremation site of Phra Nang Soi Dok Mak and named the temple “Wat Phra Chao Nang Choeng” (or Wat Phra Nang Choeng)

The assembly hall (vihara) houses a majestic Buddha image cast in B.E. 1324, 26 years before the establishment of Ayutthaya. This Buddha image was formerly called “Phra Buddha Chao Phanan Choeng”, until King Rama IV renamed it “Phra Buddha Trirattana Nayok”. It was built of stucco in subduing Mara posture and was magnificently lacquered and gilt. In front of the

Buddha Image are a talipot fan and 2 statues of disciples made of stucco sitting on its left- and right- hand side. The columns inside the assembly hall were decorated with red painting of Phum Khao Bin pattern. The capitals of the columns were ornamented with stucco multi-petal lotus flowers. All the 4 walls were indented to make several chambers which enshrine 84,000 small Buddha images. The wooden front doors were craved exquisitely with Kan Khod pattern, a distinctive feature of Ayutthya Art.

The ordination hall (ubosot) houses Sukhothai-style Buddha images. Viharn Sien in front of the main assembly hall is a rectangular building whose walls decorated by mural painting. The traditional Thai architectural sermon hall is made of wood. Its pediment was ornamented with a gable apex and ridges. The crossbeam inside was covered with the painting portraying the life of the Lord Buddha.

In addition, you will find the shrine of Chao mae Soi Dok Mak, the Chinese architecture enshrining the statue of Chao mae Soi Dok Mak in Chinese costume. The sacred statue is known as “chu-sae-near” and widely worshipped by the Chinese.

WAT YAI CHAIMONGKOL

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Wat Yai Chaimongkol is a magnificent ancient royal monastery, more than a mere place of worship. It has been the pride of Siamese people since the 13th Century. Its very existence conveys a sense of the power of the Ayutthaya Kingdom, which once expanded in all directions. From Siam to cover part of Burma to the northwest, then stretched to the east to the whole of Laos and Cambodia, and extended southward to the whole of Malaysia and the little island of Singapore. Never during those 417 years did any other nations challenge Siam's dominion of the whole Golden Peninsula.

When Siam had seen the civilization of the Ayutthaya Kingdom, there was already a myriad of languages, religions and local customs and rivers of people flowing to the vibrant city of Ayutthaya. It turned Wat Yai Chaimongkol into a national education hub from the mere schooling of royal offspring. A lot of evidence showed that a culture of literacy and education flourished with a long-lasting strength of religious sciences of Wat Yai Chaimongkol. It is this strength that hundreds of current monks and nuns inherited. As the temple's motto says, "Those who with a clear mind, they live the life of perfection and shall arise in glory. Those

whose mind are unsteady, they lament on the path of sorrow and shall never reach fullness of wisdom." (In Thai, it was written as Jai Sai Pen Boon Jai Khoon Pen Bab).

The beautiful secrets of Wat Yaichaimongkol acquired a personality of its own. The temple is alive with the smiles of Phra Buddha Chaimongkol, the most sacred Buddha image, and others. Their images not only speak of a time of freedom as well as of the affluence of the Ayutthaya Kingdom but also give a warm welcome to visitors from other lands.

Whoever comes within the sight of Ayuddhaya city can clearly see the timelessness of The Great Pagoda Chayamongkol from the far horizon. In the bright sun light, the Great Pagoda Chayamongkol gives an illusion of peace and the glorious victory of King Naresuan the Great over the Burmese four centuries earlier. He is the idol of the Thai army and the hero of all Thailand. King Naresuan the Great's victory established a supremacy throughout the whole Golden Peninsula land which lasted for centuries. The monastery has always been a safer place for his spiritual retreat. His supreme confidence in the Thai courage, Thai elephant-back combat, and Thai patriot was the legacy of Wat Yai Chaimongkol.

When the Burmese enemy sacked Ayutthaya in 1767, it spelled doom for the Ayutthaya Kingdom. Burma fired innumerable palaces and temples. Black smoke that rolled in red clouds over the city for months was still kept in the whispering winds on the top of the Great Pagoda. Genocide with mass robbery and rapine swept across the central plain of Thailand, especially in Ayutthaya city, filling water ways and rivers with rows of bodies and blood. Wat Yai Chaimongkol was seized and turned into a fortress, then it became a long-lost temple for a hundred years. Phra Ubosot (Ordination Hall) is full of mystery. The holy spirit of the large reclining Buddha with a length of 15 metres witnessed everything that happened in those days.

Upon entering the changing world of the nineteenth century, Phrakru Pawanarangi brought the ancient temple to life and created a memorable transformation. Apart from its scenery that remains enchanting blended with the ancient beauty and serenity, housing King Naresuan The Great's monument and holding renowned meditation classes also drew the nation's attention. Wat Yai Chaimongkol is now one of the most fascinating temple tourist destinations of the country, contributing a lot to the tourism development of Ayutthaya city. Visiting Wat Yai Chaimongkol is just like taking the journey into the past and is well worth a visit!

WIHAN PHRA MONGKHON BOPHIT

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ATTRACTION DETAILS

Viharn Pra Mongkolborpiti is situated on the south of Wat Prasrisanpetch and is where the bronze Buddha image in the attitude of subduing Mara is situated. This Buddha image has a lap measurement at 9.55 metres and height at 12.45 metres. This is one of the biggest Buddha image in Thailand. It was assumed to be built during the Ayuttaya Era of King Srongtam. The King transferred the location from the east side to the west side which has been the location since then. After that the King ordered to build a dome on top.

However, in the era of King Suer, a thunderbolt struck at the tip of the dome which causes damage to the dome. The King ordered to restore the dome and change the roof of the dome to a cathedral and the top of Pra Mongkolborpiti was extended during the reign of King Barommakote. During the 2nd fall of Ayuttaya, Viharn Pra Mongkolborpiti was ruined by the enemy. After that King Rama 5 ordered to restore this viharn again in the Ayuttaya architectural style. It is a good model of the Buddha image during the end of Ayuttaya reign.

Originally, the east side of the viharn is Sanam Luang, which was used for the cremation ceremony of the Kings and the royalties same as the Sanam Luang in Bangkok.

Viharn Pramongkolborpiti is opened on from 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends and public holidays. The tourists can visit Wat Prasrisanpetch or visit both temples via riding on elephants from Wang Chang Ayuttaya.

WAT PHRA MAHATHAT

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ATTRACTION DETAILS

Wat Mahathat is located west of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, at the foot of Paa Than bridge.

According to some historical records, the temple was built during the reign of Somdet Phra Borom Rachathirat I. Later Somdet Phra Ramesuan enshrined the reliquary inside the foundation of the Prang, and this incident thus originated the temple's name "Wat Mahathat" or "Wat Phra Sri Rattana Mahatat" which means the sacred temple where the relics of the Lord Buddha were installed. The Prang of Wat Mahathat was built in Early Ayutthaya. Its structure became the traditional model when constructing a temple and can be found nationwide. Within the kingdom of Ayutthaya, the reliquary holds historical and religious significance as the edifice representing the Buddha. It is believed that Somdet Phra Borom Rachathirat I or Khun Luang Pa Ngua granted a permission to build the temple, but the

completion took place during the reign of Somdet Phra Ramesuan. The Prang in which the holy relics were installed was greatly influenced by Khmer-style architecture - the lower part was made of laterite, whereas the upper part was masonry. There was a restoration during the reign of Somdet Phrachao Prasatthong in order to heighten the Prang, but this caused a serious damage to the top and the Prang was left alone with the portico. It was so unfortunate, as it was such an enormous and magnificent one. In 1956 the Fine Arts Department made another attempt to renovate and found a large number of invaluable antiques, such as the stone casket containing the relics. The casket is in fact consists of 7 superimposing stupas: a combination of lead and tin, silver, copper alloy, ebony, sandalwood, garnet and gold. Nowadays the casket is kept in Chao Sam Phaya National Museum.

Additionally, highlights of Wat Mahathat include the octagonal pagoda, the plaster base of a Buddha image, the medium-size Prang with mural paintings about the life of the Buddha, the resident hall of the Buddhist Supreme Patriarch and other smaller Viharas. What seems to be the most prominent landmark of the temple is the head of a sandstone Buddha image entwined in the roots of a Bodhi tree.

WAT LOKAYASUTHARAM

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Wat Lokayasutharam is situated at Pratoochai District, behind the Ancient Palace and the Pratoochai Primary School, in the area Of Wat Worapoh (Wat Rakhang) and Wat Worachettharam.

Wat Lokayasutharam is 800 meters from Wat Phra Mongkon Bophit. Wat Worachettharam and Wat Worapoh are also closeby. Nevertheless, we had quite some difficulty finding Wat Lokayasutharam, likely our otherwise good Ayutthaya map, was a bit off the mark.

The important feature Wat Lokayasutharam is a huge reclining Buddha image, called Phra Bhuddhasaiyart, which faces to the east.

It was constructed of bricks and cement in the art style of the Middle Ayutthaya Period. It is 37 meters long and 8 meters high. There are other impressive Reclining Buddha Images in Ayutthaya, but this seems to be the largest.

The head is placed on a lotus, and the legs overlap squarely to show the equalized toes.

Behind the Reclining Buddha Image you will find remains of other temple buildings, but honestly not much is worth seeing.