

BLACK IN ASIA

Your First 72 Hours in Asia as a Black Traveler

The free chapter from

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Black in Asia · blackinasia.org

Prices and rules checked 22 September 2026

They change. What changed and when is at pattayathailand.org/guide-updates.

Listen, man. Let me say this before anything else.

Everybody can afford the ticket. That's not the problem. It's when you get here that you get broke. I've watched it since 2017. A man lands on a Tuesday, he's a king on Wednesday, and by the second weekend he's on a video call with his cousin trying to figure out how to move money he doesn't have. Same movie, different actor. Different movie, same ending.

So this chapter is about the first three days. Not because the trip is three days. Because the first three days is where the whole trip gets decided. What you do in those 72 hours tells everybody around you — the taxi driver, the hotel, the girl at the bar, the dude selling you a "consultation" — exactly what kind of man just got off the plane. And they read it faster than you can.

I'm not going to give you a numbered list. I don't do lists. What I'm going to do is walk you through it the way it actually happens, and where there's a number you need — a fee, a fare, a visa rule — I put it in a box marked Receipts, because I don't want you taking my word for it. Take the receipt.

Let's get into it.

Hour zero: before you leave the house

Here's the thing most of these travel videos skip. The trip starts before the plane. Two forms, one passport rule, and your bank. Handle it now or handle it at the airport with a line behind you.

Thailand changed the game this month. If you're American, you used to get 60 days walking in. As of 15 September 2026 it's 30. Thirty is plenty for a first trip — it's more than plenty — but if you booked six weeks thinking you had sixty days, you're going to be standing in an immigration office in Jomtien paying for an extension. And Thailand wants you to fill out a digital arrival card before you land. It's free. Do it on your phone in the airport lounge back home, within three days of your flight.

The Philippines is the same idea, different website. Thirty days for an American, no visa, and the eTravel form done online before you fly. Same three-day window.

Both countries want six months left on your passport. Not "it's valid." Six months past the day you plan to leave. And both airlines will ask you for an onward ticket at check-in — a ticket out of the country that matches your allowed stay. Men get denied boarding in Los Angeles over this every week. Buy the cheapest flight out to anywhere and hold it.

Then call your bank. Tell them Thailand, tell them the Philippines, tell them the dates. A frozen card on night one is how a lot of trips turn into a "loan" from a girl you met four hours ago, and now she owns you.

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- Thailand, US passport: 30 days visa-free (cut from 60 on 15 Sep 2026). Extension at any immigration office: about ฿1,900 for 30 more days.
- Thailand Digital Arrival Card (TDAC): free, online, within 72 hours of arrival.

- Philippines, US passport: 30 days visa-free. First extension takes you to 59 days for roughly ₱3,030 all-in. After 59 days you need the ACR I-Card (about ₱3,000) and extensions keep stacking.
- Philippines eTravel: free, online, within 72 hours of your flight.
- Both: passport valid six months beyond your departure, and an onward ticket the airline can see.

The airport: your first test

You land. You're tired, you smell like a plane, and there's a man in a vest who's been waiting for you all day. He knows what you look like before you know where you are.

Two rules at the airport.

One — don't change money at the counter by the gate. Walk past it. Every airport in Asia has a better rate a hundred meters further on, and the ATM is fine as long as you know what it costs. In Thailand every foreign-card ATM pull is ฿220 on top of whatever your bank charges. So don't pull ฿2,000 five times. Pull ฿10,000 once and put most of it in the hotel safe. Money long is when you stop paying for the same thing twice.

Two — take the boring ride. If you're going to Pattaya, there's a bus out of Suvarnabhumi that costs a hundred and sixty-two baht. A taxi is fourteen, fifteen hundred. Grab is twelve to fifteen. The bus is clean, it's air-conditioned, and nobody on it is going to "help" you find a hotel. In the Philippines, if you're headed to Angeles, fly into Clark if you can — you're twenty minutes out. If you land in Manila, understand that what would normally be two hours is four in the traffic, and the P2P bus is a fraction of what a private car costs.

That man in the vest? Be polite. Say no. Keep walking. You're not being rude, you're being a man who knows where he's going, and that's the first thing you want everybody to see.

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- Airport bus (Suvarnabhumi → Pattaya): ฿162.
- Ekkamai bus terminal → Pattaya: ฿148. Mo Chit: ฿158.
- Metered taxi: ฿1,399–1,699 with tolls. Grab: ฿1,200–1,500.
- ATM fee in Thailand on a foreign card: ฿220 every withdrawal.

The 24 hour rule

This is the one. If you take one thing from this whole chapter, take this.

Give yourself 24 hours.

I've seen a man go with the first girl that talked to him at the airport. Not at a bar. At the airport. He'd been in the country forty minutes. And you can guess the rest of his trip, because she guessed it too.

You do not make any decision about a woman, an apartment, a motorbike, a "business opportunity," or a friend for the first 24 hours. You check in. You shower. You eat something that isn't from a plane. You sleep, because you haven't really slept in two days, and a tired man is a broke man waiting to happen.

Then you walk.

Not to the bar. Just walk. Beach Road in Pattaya, end to end. Fields Avenue in Angeles in the daytime, when it's just a street. Look at where the locals eat. Look at what things cost when nobody's selling to you. Look at who's here — and I'm telling you now, America is here. Black men are walking past these girls every single day. You are not the first one off the plane and you are not the event. Once you understand that, you stop acting like the event, and everything gets cheaper.

Twenty-four hours. That's the whole rule. The man who takes it has a different trip than the man who doesn't. I've watched both. I've been both.

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The first thing they look at is your shoes. I'm not playing. Before your face, before your watch — shoes.

I'm not telling you to wear a suit. Dress like yourself. But make sure you dress Out here the man in the flip-flops and the dirty basketball shorts is telling everybody he's already given up, and they treat him like it. Clean shoes, a shirt with a collar or at least a shirt that fits, and take a shower before you go out even if you took one at noon. It's ninety degrees and a hundred percent humidity. Everybody can smell everybody.

Keep it simple: two pairs of shoes you'd actually wear, one nice one. Leave the jewelry home. Nobody's impressed and it makes you a target on a street where the whole point is to not be a target.

On the room. Get a hotel with service — housekeeping, a front desk that's awake at 3 a.m., a safe that works. I don't care if the Airbnb is cheaper. If you bring anybody back to your room, you want somebody who knows your face at the desk, and you want a camera in the hallway. It's not paranoia. It's your word against hers if something goes missing, and out here her word is in the language the police speak. The hotel is your witness.

And get room service. Housekeeping every day. I'll explain why in the full book, but the short version is: you don't want the next person you bring back finding something the last person left.

For what a room actually costs by neighborhood in Pattaya, that's the whole Pattaya Trip Cost Guide, free at pattayathailand.org/free-guide. Don't guess. It's in there.

\$ay t%o: the money rules

Now let's break it down. Let's break it down.

You didn't come here for the beach. If you came for the beach you'd be in Cancun. You came because somebody on YouTube told you that a man like you is a king out here. And here's what they left out: you're paying for everything you're getting. That's why you're the king. You're making payments.

So let me put you up on game before the game gets put on you.

he (irl)riend bud(et s * all+ * s e, er-thin(. A man tells me he's spending eight hundred a month on a girl. Then I ask him about the phone. The phone bill. The tampons, the deodorant, the socks. Then the family. Then grandma. It's never eight hundred. And you're the last one who gets saved, buddy. She's got to save her mama, her cousins, the dog and the cat, and then you.

l) she likes -+u# she d+esn/t ask -+u)+r an-thin(. Write that down. If she likes you, she likes you, and she can get money from somewhere else — she's got two offers on the table at all times, she'd be a fool not to. So when she's with you and not asking, that's the whole test right there. And if every time she sees you she needs something? She doesn't like you. That's not a girlfriend. That's a customer with a members card, and the customer is you.

N+thin(beats)ree. I'm not talking about women. I'm talking about you. Free is the day you spent on the beach with a \$40 mango. Free is the walk. Free is the gym. The most expensive thing on this whole continent is the thing that looks like it's part of the vacation and is actually a business, and the business's whole job is to make sure you don't notice.

O hen -+u/re c+nsumer1based# -+u/re in the \$atri2. These dudes tell you they got out of the Matrix. They flew across the world to sit in a bar and pay a markup on a drink so a girl will talk to them. That's not out of the Matrix. That's a different seat in the same building. The only thing that changed is the exchange rate — and everybody out here knew about the exchange rate before you did.

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- A "lady drink" is a drink you buy so a woman will sit with you. It costs two to four times what your beer costs, she gets a cut, and the clock is running the second she sits down. You can say no to the second one.
- A bar's "fine" is the bar's fee for taking an employee out of the bar. You're paying the bar. Whatever you think you're paying for after that is between you, your conscience and the next chapter.
- The cheapest ninety minutes on Walking Street is the ninety minutes you spend walking it.

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Let me keep it real. You're going to go. Everybody goes. Walking Street in Pattaya, Fields Avenue in Angeles — you're going to walk it on night two, and you should, because it's one of the wildest streets in the world and it would never, ever happen in America. Think about it. Five hundred cops

or up to the province with somebody who was born there, and look at where the girls in the bar actually come from. What's coming from the bamboo is one thing. What's coming from the city is another. You'll understand the whole country better in one afternoon than in a month of bar stools.

And go to the gym. I mean it. You come to Thailand, you're supposed to get in shape. It's cheap, it's everywhere, and it's the only thing out here that pays you back.

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- Baht bus (songthaew) on the fixed routes: ฿15, or ฿20 on the longer Jomtien and Naklua runs (since 10 April 2026). Don't ask the driver the price — you just told him you're new. Sit down, ring the bell, hand him the coins.
- Koh Larn ferry from Bali Hai pier: ฿30 each way. Speedboat if you want to pay for the privilege of being early.

(here you)I run into us

You want to know where Black travelers actually are, not where a video told you. In Pattaya it's 808 and Flex late, and the bars on Walking Street where the music's right. In Angeles it's Walking Street itself, Fields Ave, and the spots around Astro Park after dark. You'll see us. Somebody will say "what's up." Say it back, and understand this: the brother who's been out here five years is not going to give you the game for free in a bar at 2 a.m. He might buy you a drink. He is not your consultant. Anybody charging you three hundred dollars for a phone call about Thailand is selling you what's in this chapter.

If you see me, I'm a regular man. I don't know anything at that moment. I've got to see what's up, same as you.

(hat 72 hours actually costs

Last thing, because I told you I'd give you numbers and not just talk.

These are working figures for a man who takes a clean mid-range room, eats where the locals eat twice a day and where the tourists eat once, takes the bus instead of the taxi, and goes out two of the three nights without turning the night into a mortgage. If you go higher, you know why. If you go lower, you're doing it right.

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- Pa9a-a: room ฿1,200–1,800 a night; food ฿500–800 a day; baht bus and one Koh Larn trip ฿300; two nights out ฿2,000–5,000 total. Call it ; <#000=>?#000, about @2A0=?<0, for the 72 hours. Room prices by neighborhood are in the free Pattaya cost guide.
- Ban(k+k: add ฿500 a night to the room and take the same numbers. Don't go to Bangkok expecting Pattaya results — it's a real city and it charges like one.

- Angeles City: room ₱1,800–3,000 a night; food ₱600–1,000 a day; trikes and Grab ₱500; two nights out ₱3,000–8,000 total. Call it B>2#000=20#000, about @2>0=?C0. Angeles is cheaper than Manila. Go to Angeles.

Plane's not in that. The plane you could afford. It's the 72 hours after it that this chapter was about.

The end of the beginning

I came here in 2017. The last of the glory. Everybody talks about the '96 Bulls — that's what Pattaya was then. It's a new era now, it's crowded, and the same people who told you to come will be complaining about it in a year. Mark my words.

But you can still have the trip. The man who takes the 24 hours, watches his money like a business, dresses like he's somebody, keeps his hands to himself and gets out of the box on day three — that man goes home with a story and his savings account. The other man goes home with a story too. It's just the same story as everybody else's.

Whatever happens to you once you get here, that's on you. I'm just a Black man with a passport telling you the real before you land.

The full book is — Bangkok,
Pattaya, the islands, Manila, Angeles, Cebu, Vietnam, Bali, visas, money, women, medical, kids, retiring on fifty thousand a year, and everything I couldn't fit in one free chapter. Get it at blackinasia.org.

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* keep reading + free,

- Pattaya Trip Cost Guide 2026 (free PDF, 12 pages, every price checked): pattayathailand.org/free-guide
- What changed and when — the price log: pattayathailand.org/guide-updates
- Bangkok: blackinbangkok.org · Pattaya: blackinpattaya.org · Vietnam: blackinvietnam.com · Bali: blackinbali.org · The whole map: blackinasia.org

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