

Bang Pu Seaside

This is located at Tambon Bang Pu Mai, about Kilometres 37 from Bangkok on Sukhumvit Road, opposite the Bang Pu Industrial Estate. It has long been famous for its seaside resort and also the recuperation centre, and generally associated with relaxation. It is operated by the Quartermaster Generals Department. Inside the compound, there are many gardens and a lot of trees and plants. Restaurants and bungalows are also available. During November to late July, a lot of migrating seagulls will come here, feeding along the seashore. Call 0-2323-9138, 0-2323-9983 for more information.

Bueng Tako

This is a place for water sports lovers. Water skiing and windsurfing can be enjoyed here. Rental fee is 200 Baht per hour. It is open daily.

Getting there: visitors can take the Bang Na-Trat highway going out of Bangkok, and at Kilometres 13 marker, you can see the entrance on the right hand side, on the same side as the entrance to Wat Luang Pho To, right next to Mitsubishi Co., Ltd. Call at 0-2316-7809-10 for more information

Nong Ngu Hao Farm

This farm is located at Tambon Bang Chalong on Bangna-Trat Road. Between the 14 and 15 kilometres markers, take a left turn into a side road (entrance to Krirk University) and go in about 1.5 kilometres. It started in 1986, has an area of about 10 Rais (4 acres). The main purpose being the rearing of various kinds of cobras. There are also shows of snake venom extraction and snake catching. There are various snake-skin products on sale at low prices, such as shoes, belts, bags, etc. It is open from 9.00 a.m.-5.30 p.m. Normally, it is open to only contracted Tour Operators. For the the general public, please contact the Farm in advance at: Nong Ngu How Farm, 23/2 Mu. 6, kilometre 15 (Bangna-Trat), Tambon Bang Chalong, Amphoe Bang Phli, Samut Prakan 10540, or call at 0-2312-5990.

Naval Museum

The Naval Museum is located at Bang Nang Keng, Pak Nam, Samut Prakan, opposite the Naval Academy on Sukhumvit Road, 10 kilometres from Bang Na intersection. The museum chronicles the history of the Royal Thai Navy and the important Naval battles, exhibits miniature ships such as the Royal Barges which were used in the Royal Barge Processions of King Rama V period, the warship H.M.S. Phra Ruang, Rau Barge, H.M.S. Matchanu - the first submarine of the Royal Thai Navy. It is open everyday except public holidays from 9.00 a.m.-15.30 p.m. For more information, call 0 2394

1997 or 0 2475 38080 or visit http://www.navy.mi.th/navalmuseum/index_eng.htm

How to get there: Public Bus No.508, No.511, No.525 and No.536

Samut Prakan Crocodile Farm and Zoo

It was built in 1950 as Thailand's first crocodile farm. It is now the world's largest crocodile farm. It is situated at Tambon Tai Ban, 3 kilometres from Samut Prakan town. The farm has over 60,000 crocodiles of different kinds in various pits. Daily shows feature catching crocodiles bare-handed. Shows take place every hour from 09.00-17.00., except at noon; additional shows at 12.00 and 17.00 on holidays. Feeding time is between 16.30 - 17.30. Another star attraction for visitors is the elephant show of which performances are held daily every hour from 09.30 -16.30. Furthermore, you can see tigers, chimpanzees, and other animals such as gibbons, turtles, boa constrictors, pythons, birds, camels, hippopotamuses, and of various species of fishes.

There is even a Dinosaur Museum which has on display life-size models and skeletons of more than 13 kinds of dinosaurs and also features a multi-vision slide presentation on man and prehistoric animals. The farm is open daily from 07.00 - 18.00. Admission is 300 baht. For group tours and academic institutions that require a tour guide, please contact Samut Prakan Crocodile Farm and Zoo in advance at 555 Thai Ban Road, Amphoe Muang, Samut Prakan 10280 or tel. 0 2703 4891-5, 0 2703 5144-8. Click www.crocodilefarm.com for more information.

Getting there is also possible by taking the air-conditioned buses Line Nos. 7, 8, and 11, to the end of the Line or by non air-conditioned buses Line Nos. 25 and 102, to Samut Prakan and taking another ride on a local truck (Song Thaeo) Line No. S. 1 and S. 80.

Open : Daily from 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Admission : Adult 300 baht, Child 200 baht

The Ancient City

Muang Boran or the Ancient City is the world's biggest open-air museum. It occupies an area of 500 rais (200 acres). Construction began in the latter part of 1963. It is located at Tambon Bang Pu Mai, at Km. 33.5 of the old Sukhumvit Road, 8 kilometres from Samut Prakan town. This unique attraction is the center of scaled-down and actual-size replicas of important historical sites of various provinces such as Prasat Hin Phanom Rung, Wat Mahathat Sukhothai, Phraphuttabat Saraburi, Phrathat Mueang Nakhon, Phrathat Chaiya, etc. Furthermore, there are rare traditional folk arts and cultures, some of which are hard to come by nowadays. For those who wish to learn about Thailand, they will

not be disappointed here.

Getting there: by car, take the Samrong - Samut Prakan Road to Samut Prakan T-junction and turn left going along the old Sukhumvit road (road to Bang Pu), then at approximately Km. 33 turn into an entry road to Muang Boran and drive on for 8 kilometres, Muang Boran will be on the left. To get there by bus, take the air-conditioned bus Line No. 11 (Pin Klao - Pak Nam) to the end of the Line and take the local mini-bus Line No. 36 to Mueang Boran.

The museum is open daily from 8.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m. Admission : Adult 300 baht, Child 200 baht. Fees for taking a car or van in is 50 Baht. For more information call 0-2323-9253 or 0-2224-1058-7, 0-2226-1936-7 or click www.ancientcity.com

The Erawan Museum

This three-headed elephant, Airavata was born of Khun Lek Viriyapant's ideas and imagination. It was inspired by his wish to preserve his collection of antiques as a contribution to Thai cultural heritage. Many of these were priceless objects of art they were also held as sacred objects for people of ancient cultures. According to ancient traditions they were believed to bring blessing and prosperity to the land and its people, and therefore must not be lost to outsiders. It had been Mr. Viriyapant's concern to find a way that would keep these objects safe and that would also be suitable to their traditional functions.

One day he had a visit from a Westerner who, during the course of the conversation, suggested the idea of constructing the most important building in the town in the form of an apple which according to Western traditions of belief, played a crucial part in the shaping of human destiny. This suggestion was warmly welcomed by Mr. Viriyapant. He nevertheless thought it more appropriate to adhere to Eastern traditions and thus decided on the heavenly elephant Airavata of Hindu mythology. In addition, he wanted this three-headed elephant to be more than just the vehicle of the god Indra.

The elephant would be a symbol of the centre of the universe and, as such, the building would function symbolically as the spiritual heart of the land where sacred objects of the land were housed and revered. He then designed the building and gave the design to Khun Pagepan Viriyapant, his eldest son, to begin construction. Already during the construction, the building attracted people who came to worship. Thus it fulfilled Khun Lek Viriyapant's wish to preserve sacred objects for the country. Although both Khun Lek and Khun Pagepan passed away before the construction was completed, their heirs continued their wish to create a place where ceremonies and festivals of Thai traditions might be held, and that would also serve as museum to keep the memory of Khun Lek Viriyapant's life and work alive for future generations.

Getting to The Erawan Museum : Bus No: 25,142,365 / Air-conditioned bus No: 102,507,511,536

Admissions : Adult Baht 150 / Children Baht 50

Office : The Ancient City 99/9 M.1 Muang Samut Prakan, Samut Prakan Province 10270

Tel: 0 2371 3135-6 Fax: 0 2371 3136

Open Everyday 8.00 a.m.-6.00 p.m.

Website: www.erawan-museum.com

Wat Asokaram

This temple is 6 kilometres from town. It is located in Soi Sukhaphiban 58, Tambon Thai Ban, on Sukhumvit road, its entrance is opposite Sawangkhanawat Recuperation Centre. The new temple was built by Phra Acharn Lee Thammawaro) of the Dharmayuthi sect on May 8, 1962. It is one of the important temples for practicing meditation. Worth visiting and seeing in this temple is Phra Thutangkha Chedi, a group of 13 chedi as a representative of the 13 duties of the monks on their religious trips. There is also Vihara Wisutthithamrangsi in which Acharn Lee's remains are enshrined.

Wat Klang Worawihan

This second level royal monastery is located at Tambon Pak Nam. The temple, of which the former name is Wat Takothong, was built in the late Ayutthaya period. The main building was renovated in the reign of King Rama III. The upper part of the front of the temple, above the entrance, is decorated with Chinese porcelain and ceramics. Inside the temple, there is a mural painting, depicting the first book of the Buddhist scripture dealing with the life of Lord Buddha. Later, another building was built to enshrine the 4 traces of Lord Buddha's Footprints. The hall for sermons is Thai style structure made totally from teak and upper part of the front of the building, above the entrance, is lavishly decorated with exquisite and beautifully carved wood well worth preserving.

City Pillar Shrine

The City Pillar Shrine is located at Tambon Talat. It was constructed in 1813. It has been with Amphoe Phra Pradaeng a long time - since the time when this Amphoe was once a city. It is a highly revered holy place of the people.

Pom Phlaeng Faifa

This old fortress is located at Tambon Talat. Only a few parts of the fortress are still in good condition. It was one of the fortresses of Muang Nakhon Khuaenkhan, serving as a military base at the mouth of the Chao Phraya River. There are many fortresses because King Rama I commanded that the fortresses be built for protecting the kingdom. At present, Muang Phra Pa Daeng Municipality has developed the area of the fortress into a recreational area for the townspeople. The upper part of the fortress displays several old cannons. Trees have been planted all around.

Wat Protketchettharam

Located at Tambon Song Kha Nong, this is the only Thai-Buddhism temple in Phra Pradaeng. Other temples are of the Mon-Buddhism sect. Phraya Phetphichai built it during the reign of King Rama II. A distinct and unique architectural characteristic of the temple is that its roof is covered with ancient Mon ceramic shingles, without any decorations on the temple roof. The front of the main building, Ubosot, above the entrance, is done with stucco adorned with vine lines and decorated with ancient porcelain and ceramic pieces. Inside, there is a cast-metal Buddha image in the attitude of Subduing Mara.

The second main building, Wiharn, has the same architecture as the first building. Inside the second main building, there is a reclining Buddha of which the face is very beautiful. Above the windows, there are the pictures of Dhamma Riddles of western arts style, which is extremely rare. Another building, Mondop, has a roof that is covered with ceramic shingles and decorated with small Chinese pavilions all around the edge of the roof. It enshrines Buddha images in many the attitudes and has chedis at all 4 corners. Inside the Mondop, there are Buddha images and the replication of Lord Buddha's Footprint, decorated with pearl inset.

Wat Songtham Worawihan

Wat Songtham Worawihan is an old temple of Mon-Buddhism sect. It was constructed at the same time when Muang Nakhon Khuaenkhan was being built, during the reign of King Rama III. At present, it is a second class royal monastery. The huge Phra Raman Chedi was built in Mon style. Buildings in this temple are built of brick and cement. A decoration on the roof of the temple is made of teak. The replication of Lord Buddha's Footprint was enshrined inside the temple.

Phra Samut Chedi

Phra Samut Chedi is located at Tambon Pak Klong Bang Pla Kot, on the banks of the Chao Phraya River, opposite Samut Prakan City Hall. Formerly, this chedi was located on a small island in the middle of Chao Phraya River's mouth behind Phisuea Samut Fortress. Subsequently, however, the little island became linked to the right bank of the river due to the water turning shallow. Then, King Rama II granted the construction of the Chedi but it was not completed in his time. Later, during the reign of King Rama III, construction was resumed and the 20-metre high pagoda was completed. Finally, King Rama IV commanded that the shape of the chedi be changed and also increased the chedis height to 38 metres. Inside the pagoda, contained Lord Buddha's relics, Phra Chai Wat and Phra Ham Samut Buddha images (Buddha image in the attitude of Pacifying the ocean).

Pom Phra Chulachomklao

Naval History Park at Chulachomklao Fortress is situated at the mouth of Chao Phraya River, Tambon Laem Fa Pha. You can get there using the Suksawat Road from the Phra Samut Chedi intersection. The fortress' compound houses a magnificent standing monument of King Rama V, which is located in the front of the fortress.

Pom Phra Chulachomklao is a modern fortress and has played an important role in protecting the sovereignty of Thailand during 1893 against unfriendly forces. It is the fortress forever in the memory of all Thais and a very important part of Thai history. During King Rama Vs reign, there was a period during which England and France were hunting for colonies. All neighbouring countries around Thailand were colonised by England and France. This was indeed a grave situation endangering Thailand so he sought ways to protect the country. Particularly, protection of the water of Thailand, he commanded that the fortresses at the rivers mouth be renovated and re-equipped, and also hired a foreigner who was a naval specialist as a consultant for planning the development of the Thai navy.

Pom Puen Suea Mop (Machine Gun)

Pom Puen Suea Mop (Machine Gun), used in the battle against unfriendly forces, is situated at the lower base of the fortress. **Exhibition Hall** displays the picture of damage from the wars and pictures related to the development of the Royal Thai Navy. **H.M.S.Mae Klong Battleship Museum** is a battleship that served in the Royal Thai Navy for over 60 years, the longest period of service for any vessel. The Ministry of Defense, seeing the battleship was no longer fit for active duty, de-commissioned the battleship and converted it into a museum. There are also walking paths for visitors who are interested in nature and ecological preservation. Visitors can see the mangrove forest, which is home to egrets, sea gulls, mudskippers, and many kinds of crabs. There is also a garden filled entirely with plants and trees from the mangrove forest. Getting there: by car: 7 kilometres on Highway No. 303; by bus: take the bus line number 20 which will pass the fortress, or you can take a Song Thaeo from Phra Samut Chedi to fortress, or alternatively, you can take a micro

bus (Bang Pakok route) which will stop inside the fortress.

The fortress is open daily from 8.00 a.m.-6.00 p.m. without any admission fee. To get in, visitors must seek permission by exchanging their identification cards from the on-duty officers unit at the gate. For groups of visitors that should wish to have a guide should send a request letter to H.M.S.Mae Klong Battleship Museum. Call 0-2475-6109, 0-2475-6259, and 0-2475-6357 for more information.

Wat Bang Phli Yai Nai and Old Market

Located approximately 500 metres from Bueng Tako on the canalside of Khlong Samrong, Tambon Bang Phli Yai. The temple was formerly known as Wat Phlapphla Chai Chana Songkhram built to commemorate King Naresuan the Great's victory over the Burmese. Later, a large bronze Buddha image of the Sukhothai style in the gesture of subduing Mara, with open eyes, was taken to be enshrined as the principal image of Phra Ubosot. The image became much revered by the people who have called it Luangpho To. Hence, the temple is otherwise known as Wat Luangpho To. During the annual Yon Bua or Rap Bua Festival which takes place one day before the full moon of the 11th lunar month, Luangpho To will be taken in a boat procession along the canal. There is an old canalside market near the temple where visitors can walk around and buy some food and useful items. Open during 8.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Bang Namphueng Floating Market

A new floating market near Bangkok located at Tambon Bang Namphueng, Phra Pradaeng District. It originated under the cooperation between the Bang Namphueng Subdistrict Administration Organization and local community in an attempt to release their superabundant crops and, as a consequence, create employment and income to the community. The charm of this floating market is the canalside lifestyle of the community whose members are mostly Thai – Mon. Local products and famous food such as fish-scale flowers, herbal joss sticks, Hoi Thot (fried mussel pancake), Khanom Khrok or mortar-toasted pastry, mango, etc. are also offered on sale. A rowing boat for rent is available at 20 Baht each. A bicycle trek to experience the local lifestyle and visit the fruit orchards is also provided with a bicycle for rent available at 30 Baht each. Bang Namphueng Floating Market is open only on Saturdays and Sundays during 8.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. For more information, please contact Chief of the Bang Namphueng Subdistrict Administration Organization at Tel. 0 1171 4930 or Bang Namphueng Subdistrict Administration Organization Office at Tel. 0 2819 6762.

To get there By car – exit from the Express Way (Dao Khanong – Suk Sawat) to Suk Sawat Road, turn beside the BP gas station near Phra Pradaeng – Suk Sawat T-junction toward Phra Pradaeng Market, turn left via Wat Song Tham Worawihan for approximately 5 kilometres, turn right for another 1 kilometre upon noticing the direction sign to the floating market until arriving at Bang Namphueng Health Centre which provides a parking area. By bus – take air-conditioned bus No. 138 (Chatuchak

– Phra Pradaeng), No. 140 (Victory Monument – Suk Sawat Express Way), No. 506 (Pak Kret – Phra Pradaeng), or ordinary bus No. 82 (Sanam Luang – Phra Pradaeng).

Wat Bang Phli Yai Klang

Located on the northern bank of Khlong Samrong in Tambon Bang Phli Yai, not too far from Wat Bang Phli Yai Nai. It was constructed around 1824 and originally called Wat Klang before changing to Wat Rat Satta Tham and eventually Wat Bang Phli Yai Klang. The temple contains an immense reclining Buddha image of approximately 53 metres long known as Somdet Phra Sakayamuni Si Sumet Bophit. There are 4 storeys inside the image itself. The 1st floor houses meditation cells; the 2nd floor has images of the 500 Arahats and murals depicting Hell and Heaven; the 3rd floor has paintings of several other sacred Buddha images; the 4th floor houses the Lord Buddha's relic taken from Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1987, and also the Reclining Buddha's heart.