

## National Theater

There is much more to Bangkok by night than just the glitter of pubs and bars. Exceptionally more popular among tourists are the cultural shows staged by various Thai restaurants. This would be the perfect introduction to Thailand's highly-styled classical dance, accompanied by music played on traditional instruments. Dressed in gorgeous costumes, dancers perform the slow graceful movements that make up the intricate language of classical Thai dance drama. Visually stunning, these shows are a must!

If you are looking for something a little more highbrow, you will not be disappointed. Although Bangkok does not have regular offerings of plays, operas or concerts, performances are nonetheless frequently staged by both local and international artists. The Thailand Cultural Centre and Thailand's National Theatre are the main venues

Theatrical events in Bangkok include Thai dance and puppet performances, English and Thai language dramas, concerts by visiting international artists, musical performance and infrequently imported mimes and plays. Visitors are advised to consult the English language newspapers, particularly the weekly or daily calendar of events, to confirm the times and dates of current performances.

Thailand's National Theatre predominantly shows Thai Classical drama and features performances of Khon - drama where players wear traditional Thai masks. These are truly wonderful productions; extremely ornate costumes, excellent lighting – everything you could want. You can see exhibitions of Thai classical dancing and music on the last Friday and Saturday of each month. The theatre does, however, venture into more international aspects of the medium and it's worth getting hold of their schedule. Sitting through a long Thai language production can be demanding and it is possible to see similar productions at some of Bangkok's entertainment venues. As a result, unless you really are a theatre aficionado, seeing a play at the National Theatre might not be at the top of your priority list.

The other types of international arts are performed at The National's Theater. Performers elaborately enact, with the aid of dramatic lighting and costume, musical and dance numbers derived from the courts and villages of Thailand's four regions. The building contains a main auditorium, a small theater, a workshop and the Sankhitasala - for open-air musical performances. Special exhibition shows of classical Thai dance and music are held on the last Friday and Saturday of each month.

