



The
Grand Palace



This palace has an area of 218,400 sq. metres and is surrounded by walls built in 1783. The length of the four walls totals 1900 metres. Within these walls are situated government offices and the Chapel Royal of the Emerald Buddha besides the royal residences. When Siam restored law and order after the fall of Ayudhaya the monarch lived in Thonburi on the other side of the river. King Rama I, immediately on ascending the throne, moved the centre of administration to this side of the Chao Phraya; and, after erecting public monuments such as fortifications and monasteries, built a palace to serve not only as his residence but also his offices - the various ministries, only one of which remains in the palace walls. This palace came to be known as the Grand Palace, in which the earliest edifices contemporary with the foundation of Bangkok were the two groups of residences named the Dusit-Mahaprasard and the Mahamontien.

The **Grand Palace** (Thai: พระบรมมหาราชวัง, *Phra Borom Maha Ratcha Wang*) is a complex of buildings in Bangkok, Thailand. It served as the official residence of the king of Thailand from the 18th century to the mid-20th century. After the death of King Ananda in the Baromphiman Palace, King Bhumibol moved the official royal residence to Chitralada Palace. Construction of the palace complex began in 1782, during the reign of King Rama I.



The palace complex sits on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River. The other approaches to the palace are protected by a defensive wall of 1,900 metres in length, which encloses an area of 218,400 square metres. Further out from the wall is a canal, which was also created for defensive purposes, making the area surrounding the palace an island, known as Rattanakosin. The Grand Palace adjoins Wat Phra Kaew in a common compound, The Royal Chapel or Wat Phra Kaew famously known as Temple of Emerald Buddha is situated in the same compound, it houses the Emerald Buddha, the most sacred Buddha image in Thailand and is where you will end up after exiting Wat Phra Kaew. Despite the proximity of the two, there's a distinct contrast in style between the very Thai Wat Phra Kaew and the more European inspired designs of the Grand Palace (the roof being the exception). The Grand Palace is nowadays used only for occasional ceremonial purposes and is no longer the royal residence. The present King Bhumibol (Rama IX) lives in Chitralada Palace (also closed to tourists), which is located not too far away in Bangkok's Dusit district. Though the interior of most of the buildings remain closed to the public

Highlights of it are:

- *Boromabiman Hall*, built by King Rama VI and every king since has lived here at some time.

- *Amarinda Hall*, the original residence of King Rama I and the Hall of Justice. Nowadays it's impressive interior is used for ceremonial occasions and coronations. It contains the antique throne, used before the Western style one presently in use.

- *Grand Palace Hall / Chakri Maha Prasat*, visitors are allowed inside the spacious European style reception room. This building has not been used for royal residence since the

mysterious death of King Rama VIII (the older brother of the current King), found shot dead in his room in 1946. The reverence for the monarchy in Thailand means that, even today, this remains a completely taboo subject to talk publicly about in Thailand.

- *The impressive Dusit Hall*, rated as perhaps the finest architectural building in this style.

- *The Museum*, which has information on the restoration of the Grand Palace, scale models of the Wat and Palace and numerous Buddha images. Labels are in Thai only, but there are free English tours available frequently. (Entrance is 50B.)

Prominent parts of the Grand Palace :

- Wat Phra Kaew, the temple containing the Emerald Buddha
- Chakri Mahaprasad Hall, a building in a style influenced by the Italian Renaissance

The Grand Palace for Thai is an important symbol of Bangkok which has area more than 240,000 square-metres that visitors both Thais and foreigners always visit and worship The Emerald Buddha, the most sacred Buddha image in Thailand, in The temple of the Emerald Buddha, which adjoins on common ground. The Grand Palace was built on time of King Rama I the Great, the first king of Chakri Dynasty, in the same time of moving the capital from Thonburi to Bangkok. The new palace was constructed to resemble Ayudhaya palace, which is destroyed since then, leaving the prosperity behind. A lot of Thai master craftsmen at that time left their great works to The Grand Palace, especially special beautiful art objects and architecture which hard to see at anywhere in the world. The great beauties, that visitors can see and touch, came from Thai-Brahmin believing that Thai king was god as Narai who was born to help and ward off sorrows for people. Thus, The Grand Palace was a place for king as for god and people should build it as palace in heaven.

There are three areas on common ground of The Grand Palace;

- **Outside**

This area is an area for the temple of the Emerald Buddha and beautiful buildings and including constructions, art objects and architecture. The great art object of the outside is painting of Ramayana story on the wall around the temple or stone giants in front of gates (we will serve detail about The temple of the Emerald Buddha for the next time).

- **Middle**

This is an area for kings to stay and to come out for checking and managing the country with ministers. There are lots of beautiful art objects and buildings such as Dusit Hall, Borombiman Hall, Amarindra Hall and Chakri Maha Prasat.

- **Inside**

This is forbidden area for normal people because it used to be a living place for ladies and children (if boys became 10 years old, they must moved out). Therefore, tourists who would like to visit The Grand Palace should wear polite dresses for respect in the place as the palace in heaven.

Construction of the Royal Palace began in 1782 and was completed in time for the coronation of Rama I. The original living quarters were temporary and made of wood and thatch and the walls surrounding the palace were made of wood palisades. After the coronation the King moved into a mansion built of permanent materials. The only other building of permanent material at the time was Wat Phra Si Rattanasatsadaram (Temple of the Emerald Buddha) and the forts along the walls.

The plan of this new Royal Palace follow that of the Ayudhaya period. Only the central building seen today was missing until constructed as the Chakri Maha Prasat during the reign of King Rama V. The area of the original palace was about 51 acres. King Rama II expanded the area to todays size of about 60 acres.

The Royal Palace contains a number of halls, residences, and other buildings constructed by King Rama I. Later monarchs altered some and renovated others while still others were enlarged or torn down to make way for newer buildings.

All the buildings are not listed here but the most important ones are. The buildings are listed in groups according to their location inside the palace walls. A trip to Bangkok would not be complete without visiting the Royal Grand Palace.

- **The Phra Maha Monthein Group**

This group of buildings is located in the central part of the Grand Palace toward the eastern side. It was the first group of buildings constructed by King Rama I and his own residence. He also used it for his coronation and has been used for coronations of all monarchs of the Chakri dynasty.

- **The Phra Maha Prasat Group**

Two building in this group were constructed during the reign of King Rama I.

- **The Phra Thinang Chakri Maha Prasat Group**

This group was built by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) and in the beginning consisted of 11 buildings but only three remain today.

- **The Borophiman Mansion and Siwalai Garden Group**

When King Rama II had the palace precincts expanded he ordered three golden halls and many European and Chinese style building to be constructed. Later King Rama III had these buildings pulled down to make room for temples to be constructed dedicated to his late father. King Mongkut (Rama III) ordered a residence also be constructed and stayed there until the end of his life.
