ROADS and TRAFFIC SIGNALS/SIGNS

Roads

Thailand has a large network of roads that can take you to just about any place you want to go. In Thailand, you drive on the left, which can be an added challenge for Americans, Canadians, and Europeans that are used to driving on the right.

The majority of roads are paved, most of which are in good condition - but always be alert for potholes - especially during and just after the rainy season (mainly June through September). There are several motorways in and around Bangkok including Highway 7 from Bangkok to Pattaya. A portion of this road is a toll way. There is another toll road from Bangkok to Chonburi (provincial capital) - you can divert over to Highway 7 before entering Chonburi. Otherwise you will continue on Highway 3 to Sriracha on to Pattaya, which is slower going because of crossover traffic, traffic signals, etc. These two toll road to/from Bangkok/Pattaya provide access to Suvarnabhumi Airport.

The toll roads are well maintained and multilane with the speed limit for cars being 120kph (75mph) - no motorcycles are allowed on the toll ways. The main arteries such as Highway 1 going North out of Bangkok or Highway 2 going from Saraburi toward Nakhon Ratchasema (Khorat) are generally four or more lanes (two or more in each direction - sometimes divided by a median). Other paved roads are two-lane and can be quite slow going because of trucks and other slow moving vehicles such as farm trucks and tractors, not to mention the occasional wait for cattle to get across the road. On the main roads, most signs are now in Thai script with roman characters beneath - transliterated Thai for place names and English for warning signs and places of interest. The speed limit when going through a town is usually 60kph (about 37mph).

During the rainy season, roads can become flooded. In Pattaya, usually a cloud will come up, it will rain heavily for 30 minutes to an hour, slack off with rain continuing for another 30 minutes to an hour, and then stops. The downpours can be quite heavy and certain streets are prone to flooding. During such times, it is a good idea to avoid driving for a while to allow the water to drain off.
Traffic Signs and Signals

Speed limit signs on other than the motorways are few and far between. Highway speed limits for roads other than the toll ways are generally 90kph (about 56ph). Most warning and other traffic signs follow the international convention used by most countries and can be readily understood.

Directional signs can be confusing at times as they are often put at places which make them ambiguous where you have to turn off - sometimes they are put before a minor road that you shouldn’t go down or just after the road that you should use. Something you will have to get used to.

Traffic signals can also be somewhat confusing. There is no standard for placement. Also, when approaching a traffic signal, you will see both a red and green light - this usually indicates that through traffic can proceed, vehicles making right turns must stop - when the green light goes out, a green right turn arrow will then usually appear. In several of the larger cities, they have installed traffic signals with countdown timers - green for how many seconds remaining for through traffic to proceed and red for how many seconds before the green light will come on.

Common Traffic Light Signals
TRAFFIC SIGNS - THAILAND

Stop sign  
Yield sign  
No access to cars  
No overtaking  
No entry  

No U-turn  
No left U-turn  
No left turn  
No right turn  
No changing to left lane  

No changing to right lane  
No right turn nor right U-turn  
No Left Turn nor U-turn  
give way to oncoming traffic  
Closed to trucks  

Closed to motorcycles  
No Trailers allowed  
Closed to Tuk-Tuks  
closed to bicycles  

No push carts  
No agricultural vehicles  
Closed to motorized cycles  
closed to motorized vehicles  
Closed to bi- or tri-cycles  

No Ox carts  
No honking  
No pedestrians  
No parking  
no stopping / no parking  

Police Check point  
Maximum Speed limit  
Maximum weight limit  
No overtaking  
Maximum Height Limit