

# Tips to feeling more like a local when studying abroad <http://tinyurl.com/y9b9lf3>

As a student studying abroad in a foreign city, you obviously would like to see all the tourist hot spots. You definitely want to learn and see all the things that attracted you to pick that city. But where there are tourist attractions, there are lots of tourists. Often doing things and activities that the locals do gives you the student more insight into the people and culture of the city in which you are temporarily a member. The following are easy (and cheap!) ways to immerse yourself into the city you are learning in.

**1. Get a newspaper.** Just like papers that circulate here, there are sections dedicated to telling the reader what entertainment is happening for the week i.e. shows, local bands playing in parks, flea markets, etc. Many of these things are free or relatively cheap.

English Newspapers in Thailand

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<b>Bangkok Post:</b>	<a href="http://www.bangkokpost.com/">http://www.bangkokpost.com/</a>
<b>The Nation:</b>	<a href="http://www.nationmultimedia.com/home/">http://www.nationmultimedia.com/home/</a>
<b>National News Bureau</b>	<a href="http://thainews.prd.go.th/newsenglish/index_en.php">http://thainews.prd.go.th/newsenglish/index_en.php</a>
<b>Business Day</b>	<a href="http://www.biz-day.com/">http://www.biz-day.com/</a>
<b>Daily Express</b>	<a href="http://xpress.nationmultimedia.com/">http://xpress.nationmultimedia.com/</a>
<b>Student Weekly</b>	<a href="http://www.student-weekly.com/thisweek/">http://www.student-weekly.com/thisweek/</a>

Or, grab a local Thai paper and use it to help with your learning of the language. The newspaper is an excellent source to help improve your language skills.

\*\*\* *Thai newspapers can be graphic in nature.*

**2. Ride public transit.** Taxis are not expensive and quite convenient. They can also offer interaction if you want to practice your language with the driver. Hoping on a bus is an adventure. You can not only observe, but you also can see a lot of the city that you might not have seen otherwise. Be sure you know the route and whether or not that specific bus will continue to the final stop. Set aside enough time to get to your destination, especially during hi-traffic times

## **SUBWAY**

- The subway is not likely to be a main mode of transportation but still useful.
- Bangkok has 1 subway line, which connects to the Skytrain.
- The subway typically runs from 6:00 am to midnight and costs depending on distance of trip.
- To pay you can purchase single trip tokens at the station, or purchase pre-paid refillable transportation cards.

For more information about the Bangkok MRT take a look at their website:

<http://www.bangkokmetro.co.th/map.aspx?Menu=8&Lang=En>

## **SKYTRAIN**

- The Skytrain is likely to be an important link in your transportation usage.
- Bangkok currently has 2 lines, which give easy access to much of the city
- The Skytrain runs from 6:00 am to midnight and cost depends on distance of trip.
- To pay you can purchase single use cards at the station or purchase pre-paid refillable Smart Pass cards.

For more information about Bangkok Transit System Skytrain take a look at BTS Skytrain site <http://www.bts.co.th/en/btstrain.asp>

**Combined System Map: [Skytrain and Subway Map](#)**

## **BUSES**

- Buses are in abundance, but can be complex and difficult to use.
- Buses run on no specific time schedule, waits vary between 5 and 45 minutes
- The primary buses from Bangkok to MUIC are: 84, 164, 543, and 515.
- To pay bus fares, you must have cash. Change can be made by attendant (smaller bills preferred)

For more information about Bangkok Mass Transit Authority take a look at the BMTA site <http://www.bmta.co.th/en/index.php>

## **TRAIN**

- Provides safe and inexpensive way to get from around Thailand as well as to border countries such as Malaysia, Laos, and Cambodia.
- Thailand has 1 major train station; Hualampong Station in Bangkok. (*connects to subway*)

For more information about Thai train transportation contact the State Railway of Thailand at [www.railway.co.th/english/index.asp](http://www.railway.co.th/english/index.asp), or [www.seat61.com/Thailand.htm](http://www.seat61.com/Thailand.htm)

**3. Shop at flea markets.** In flea markets, many handmade and home grown products can be found. You can get many unique pieces at these markets and for very cheap.

Markets in Bangkok:

- [Chatuchak Market:](#)
- [China Town \(Yaowarat\)](#)
- [Suan Lum Night Bazaar:](#)
- Siam Shopping Area: ([Siam Paragon](#), [Siam Discovery](#), [MBK](#), [Central World](#))

Other markets near MUIC:

[Amphawa Floating Market](#)  
[Damnoen Saduak](#)

**4. Eat food from a street vendor.** Food from street vendors may sound questionable, but it is often quite delicious. Do be cautious though, and wait until you have fully adjusted to local cuisine before trying street vendor food. Use your best judgment!

- **Pad Thai** = Noodle & sprout omelet with peanuts & brine shrimp
- **Gwai-Dtee-Yaow** = Noodle Soup w/ meat and veggies (Pork, Chicken)
- **Sai Grawk** = Sausage links (Pork, Chicken)
- **Luuk chin** = Meat ball (Pork, Chicken, Fish)
- **Kanohm** = Snacks (Breads & Sweets)
- **Kaow Man Gai** = Chicken on Rice w/sauce comes with soup
- **Gai Tod** = Fried Chicken
- **SomTam** = Green Papaya Salad (many varieties)
- **PoanLaMai** = Fruit

**5. Walk and wander.** Though riding public transit is part of the experience, walking is an adventure all in itself. You will come across a variety of shops, eateries, clubs, etc. You will find things you did not know existed. As well as discovering hidden treasures, exploration will help you better acquaint yourself to the city. In no time, you will be able to easily find your way around town and may even be comfortable enough to give directions to others. Then you will really feel like a local and less like a tourist or visitor.

These are just five simple actions you as a student can do to “fit-in” and learn about everyday life for locals in the city you are studying abroad in. These are cheap and easily accommodating ways to feel like a local on a student budget. When not popping around the city with a camera, take a break and do as the locals do.