Siam Legal International Explains Who Lost Access as Thailand Visa-Free Stay Is Cut

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Siam Legal International, a law firm in Thailand, is clarifying how each group of nationalities is treated under the visa exemption framework that took effect on September 15, 2026. The reduction of the main exemption list from 93 to 60 countries and territories has been widely read as a loss of visa-free entry for 33 nationalities, but 21 nationalities lost visa-free access outright, while others now enter under bilateral agreements or new exemption tiers.

On August 31, 2026, the Royal Thai Government Gazette published four Ministry of Interior notifications that revoked the July 2024 scheme and replaced it with new frameworks. Nationals of the 60 countries and territories on the new main list, which includes all 27 European Union member states, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and several Gulf and Southeast Asian partners, may now stay visa-free for up to 30 days for tourism. India, which was the subject of conflicting reports during the drafting stage, remains on the 30-day list.

A second group left the unilateral list because it already holds bilateral visa exemption agreements with Thailand. As detailed in Siam Legal's Thailand visa-free stay guide, these nationalities were removed to

eliminate overlapping legal frameworks, and their agreements remain in force. Nationals of South Korea, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru may stay up to 90 days, while nationals of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Laos, Mongolia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Macao, and Timor-Leste may stay up to 30 days. Nationals of Cambodia and Myanmar may stay up to 14 days, with Myanmar limited to air arrivals.

The actual removals affected countries that were added during the 2024 expansion, do not hold separate bilateral agreements, and were not placed on the new 60-country schedule. The 21 nationalities in this group are Albania, Andorra, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kosovo, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Panama, Papua New Guinea, San Marino, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Uzbekistan. Ordinary passport holders from these countries must now obtain a visa before traveling, such as a 60-day tourist visa issued through the Thai e-Visa portal or a Thai embassy or consulate.

A separate 15-day visa exemption tier was created for nationals of Mauritius and Seychelles. Visa on Arrival saw the sharpest reduction of any entry option, from 31 nationalities to three, namely Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Serbia. Nationals removed from the Visa on Arrival list can no longer obtain a visa at the port of entry and must arrange a visa in advance.

For nationals on the 30-day list, a one-time extension of up to 30 additional days is available at immigration offices for THB 1,900, allowing a total stay of up to 60 days. Entries through land border checkpoints are limited to twice per calendar year, although passport holders from Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, and Singapore are exempt, and air arrivals are not subject to the cap.

"The figures of 60 and 93 matter far less than the framework a specific passport falls under," said Rex Baay, Senior Immigration Consultant and Operations Manager at Siam Legal International. "A South Korean traveler and a Mexican traveler were both removed from the same list, yet one can still enter for up to 90 days while the other now needs a visa before boarding. Entry is no longer governed by a single list but by several separate instruments, and each carries its own terms."

Siam Legal observes that the restructuring returns Thailand to a country-specific system in which unilateral exemptions, bilateral agreements, and Visa on Arrival eligibility operate independently. With the exemption now limited to tourism, travelers who need a longer stay or are visiting for other purposes, such as business, study, or family, should plan to apply for the appropriate visa before departure.

Siam Legal International is a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience assisting foreign nationals in Thailand, with offices in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. The firm provides

comprehensive legal and immigration support across residency planning, property transactions, business law, and litigation.

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American-managed Thailand law firm with 22+ years? experience. Experts in corporate setup, BOI, FBL, family & divorce, property, litigation, immigration, notary, wills, contracts & due diligence across Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya & more.

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