Siam Legal International Highlights Thailand's Planned Free Stopover Tours for Transit Passengers

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Siam Legal International, a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience in Thailand, has highlighted Thailand's plan to introduce free short tours for international transit passengers with long layovers. The proposed scheme would allow travelers to leave the airport for a brief visit before continuing to their final destination, with a pilot expected to begin in early 2027 at Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Phuket, and Krabi airports.

The program is aimed at transit passengers with layovers of around six to eight hours, travelers who would otherwise spend those hours inside the terminal watching the departures board. During that time, travelers would be able to join a short tour, experience a nearby attraction, and return to the airport for their connecting flight.

At launch, the tour packages are expected to be free of charge. The Ministry of Transport has signed a memorandum of understanding with six organizations to connect Thailand's transport and aviation sector with its tourism and service industries.

Booking details have not yet been released, as the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is still developing the tour packages. TAT is considering three main types of itineraries, covering culture and history, food, and wellness.

Culture and history packages may include the Grand Palace, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, and the Ancient City in Samut Prakan. Food tours could focus on Thai cuisine and street food, while wellness packages may include spa treatments or traditional Thai massage.

Travelers who leave the airport will need to clear immigration like any other arriving passenger. This means standard entry requirements will apply, including completing the Thailand Digital Arrival Card (TDAC) before arrival.

"A long layover has always meant hours spent in the terminal, and this scheme could turn that time into a first taste of Thailand," said Rex Baay, Senior Immigration Consultant and Operations Manager at Siam Legal International. "Because participants will clear immigration like any other arriving passenger, the usual entry requirements still apply, so completing the Thailand Digital Arrival Card before arrival will remain an important part of planning a stopover tour."

The stopover tours are part of a wider effort to position Thailand as a major hub for international passenger transfers. Suvarnabhumi Airport alone handles around 1.3 million transit passengers each year, and TAT is targeting participation from around 10 percent of these travelers, or roughly 130,000 people.

The longer-term goal is to give transit passengers a brief introduction to Thailand, encouraging them to return for a longer stay or holiday in the future. By connecting airports directly with nearby attractions, the scheme is designed to turn time spent waiting between flights into an opportunity to experience the country.

The scheme is still in the planning stage, and further details on bookings, eligibility, and tour schedules are expected closer to launch. Until those details are released, transit passengers passing through the four pilot airports in early 2027 should continue to plan around the standard entry requirements that will apply to anyone leaving the airport. Siam Legal's free Thailand stopover tours report the proposed program and the entry requirements that will apply to participants.

Siam Legal International is a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience serving foreign and Thai clients, with offices in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. The firm provides comprehensive legal support across immigration, property transactions, business law, family law, and litigation.
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