

AYUTTHAYA – CLASSIC BOAT TRACK
(City Island Round Trip)

This boat tour is designed for the modal tourist who wants to explore the rivers and canals, as well temples and ruins around the city of Ayutthaya, either by long tail boat or by barge. The tour (anti-clockwise) takes you on a stretch which was once a part of the front city moat, dug for defensive purposes; follows Khlong Muang or the city canal, in former times a part of the Lopburi River, which in the Ayutthayan era encircled the city; turns at Hua Laem into the mighty Chao Phraya River or the River of Kings and finally between Wat Ratanachai at Hua Sarapha and Wat Phanan Choeng, steer up north, on a stretch of the Pa Sak River or Teak wood River, which find their source in Loi province. The total length of this boat route is 13.6 kilometers.

The Chao Phraya in Ayutthaya is a tidal river and influences the Pa Sak and Lopburi rivers. The current shifts daily, depending on the tide in the Gulf of Thailand, with an exception at the end of the rainy season, when the floodwaters overrun the tide.

Ayutthaya was a typically a Siamese water-based settlement; one of the characteristics which gave the city its UNESCO World Heritage status. Unfortunately, Ayutthaya's waterways - the ancient transport and travel facilities - are fast disappearing. Many canals became stagnant, choked with urban trash or ran dry due to silting and lack of maintenance. Many were claimed to make way for embankments such as concrete roads. Ayutthaya, "The Venice of the East", became a far cry. Notwithstanding, a tour around the island still is a wonderful event.

Whether you go for a long tail boat or a small barge is your proper choice. Long tail boats tends to do the tour in a bit more than half an hour, while a barge does the trip in a more leisurely 1.5 to 2 hours.

Longtail boats called "Rua Hang Yao", are a common form of water transportation used in Thailand and take their name from the long drive shaft that ends in a propeller and which is attached directly to rear of a cat engine. The tail not only propels the boat but also its steering mechanism. The concept was developed in Thailand as a simple low cost means of motorizing wooden boats used in rivers, canals and seas, able maneuvering in narrow, shallow waters.

Among the oldest Thai barges is the "rua mat", distinguished by its duckbill-shaped bow and stern. This type of dug-out boat, made of a single hardwood log, mostly from Malabur wood, was used to transport rice and other cargo. The "rua mat" was carved out with a chisel and its size sometimes enhanced by heating the carved log over a fire or by putting smoldering rice husks in its interior. When the wood was softened, the two halves were separated to broaden the hull. The boat was initially steered by a tiller, but is now mainly driven by an engine.

Only small barges can make the full city tour as the bridges over Khlong Muang are rather low, preventing larger barges to make the complete round tour.

If you are interested in viewing photographs of the temples in advance or would like additional historic information about these ruins, visit our website at www.ayutthaya-history.com.

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Tips and Warnings

Long tail boats can be rented at the pier in front of the Chantrakasem Palace Museum near Hua Ro, just opposite Wat Monthon on Ko Loi.

Small barges are not found in quantity on Ayutthaya's rivers, but "The Seven Seas Restaurant" near the railway station has an old roofed "rua mat" for rent. (See: <http://www.ayutthaya-sevenses.com/boat-trips.html>).

Who are we?

Ayutthaya Historical Research (AHR) consists of a small group of researchers/writers with the aim to promote Ayutthaya's cultural heritage. We are local expatriates who have been living in Ayutthaya for many years and would like to share our knowledge with future visitors. Therefore, we have personally tested each of these suggested routes by cycling and/or walking. More information on the authors can be found at: <http://www.ayutthaya-history.com/Authors.html>

In case of emergency or accident:

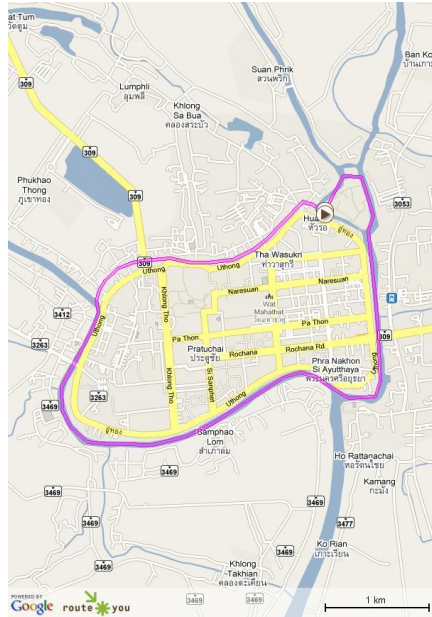
Contact the Ayutthaya Tourist Police Station: (035) 241-446, (035) 242-352 or 1155.

Disclaimer

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The route

Historical signboard in situ is marked as (*)
Entry fee required is marked as (\$)
Boat dock present marked as (+)

- ❖ From the starting point - the landing at the open market in front of the Chantra Kasem Museum - the boat will take you north along a stretch of the former Front city moat.
- ❖ On your left hand side, you will bypass the Hua Ro market, where once the proud Maha Chai Fortress stood. The boat will pass under a metal bridge which replaced the old Thamnon Ro Bridge, while right in front of you is a water confluence, being the mouth of the old Lopburi River.

Tulad Hua Ro is a local fresh market in existence since 200 years. The name "Hua Ro" is derived from the "Thamnon Ko", a kind of weir made of wooden beams positioned in the water to break the speed of the old Lopburi River in order to prevent damage to the embankments. The market was situated in the vicinity of the water speed breaker, hence its name. The weir was situated at the confluence of the old Lopburi and the Front city moat where the Maha Chai fortress one stood. The market is being touristic promoted as a traditional market. Long time ago a big fire burned down the two storey wooden shop houses of the market. The story goes that a woman in Chinese opera costume, standing on top of the roof of the lined storey houses, waving her arm to put out the fire. Residents believed it was the Chinese Goddess Chao Mae Ton Jan, protector of the market. The Hua Ro market was renovated afterwards. Since 1967 locals organized yearly a Chinese opera performance to pay respect to the goddess. A Chinese shrine has been built at the northern rim of the market along Khlong Mhang.

Saphan Thamnon Ro was the only bridge in the Ayutthaya period that connected the city island to the main land. Transportation from one riverbank to another was done by ferryboat at that time, hence the many landings ("Tha") around the city. The Thamnon Ro Bridge derived also its name from the wooden weir positioned here in the water to break the speed of the Lopburi River. The Maha Chai Fortress was located on the corner of the city island, where now the Hua Ro Market is situated. The bridge dates from the White Elephant War (1563-1564), when the Burmese used rubble to build a bridge that crossed the old Lopburi River in order gain access to the city. During the reign of King Chakrapath (r.1548-1569), the causeway was renovated to include bricks. It was 6 meters in width and had gaps in the middle with removable planks. This causeway was then used for state purposes only. Thamnon Ro Bridge was destroyed during Ayutthaya's siege in 1766-1767, but many old bricks and laterite blocks can be seen in the vicinity where it once stood. A metal walking bridge stands in the approximate location, connecting the Hua Ro Market to the Phantien peninsula.

- ❖ The boat will turn to the left in western direction, along the city canal, the later being the Lopburi River in former times. The first bridge you will go under is linking the Hua

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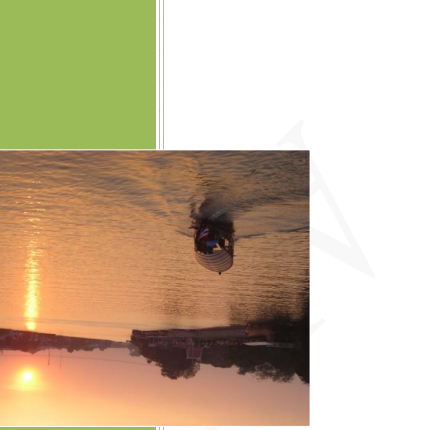
- ❖ Learning The Markets: the boat will head towards the confluence with Khlong Tho, formerly called Khlong Chakrai Yai, now protected by a sturdy water gate. This canal through the whole place area in the northern gate of Wat Sri Saphan, offering discretion and shade.
- ❖ The Market: the market landing was the road place just beyond the Phantien peninsula. To the east of the market from this landing run a covered corridor (The Chumbun) all way to the market. The whole place was used for state purposes only.
- ❖ Passing under the bridge and looking to the southern river bank, you will see beautiful view.

- ❖ After the shrine the boat takes you to the middle of the canal, where the old Phantien market was situated. You will pass a water gauge.
- ❖ Continuing along the river where once the road barges were situated, you will pass a water gauge. The king probably used the Grand Palace Old city pillar as water gauge.
- ❖ The boat will continue on the city canal. Arriving at Wat Kai Thong and just before the temple's bridge over the city canal, stands a strange stone pillar and above it a stone structure. This pillar is the old Phantien market, which once stood on the northwestern corner of the Grand Palace. During the reign of King Rama III above sea level. The king probably used the Grand Palace Old city pillar as water gauge.

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Ayutthaya – Classic Boat Track
2010
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monastery was initially named Wat Tha as it was situated on a landing of the Chao Phraya premises during weekends. It is also popular today because of its impressive balconies. This with Buddha images, which have recently become a hot spot due to its location. **Wat Tha Kaeng** or the "Monastery of the Landing of the Crying Crow" is an active temple in the north bank. Wat Phra Prang, a few kilometers north of the city, is a prominent landmark. **Wat Maha Phra Prang** is an active temple in the north bank. **Wat Phra Prang** is an active temple in the north bank. **Wat Phra Prang** is an active temple in the north bank. **Wat Phra Prang** is an active temple in the north bank. **Wat Phra Prang** is an active temple in the north bank. **Wat Phra Prang** is an active temple in the north bank.

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