

## Suggested Reading List for Thailand

### Books

#### **Bangkok Found** (*Alex Kerr*)

Both informative and inspiring, this book is a memoir of the author's experiences in Thailand's exotic capital. Explaining in fascinating detail Thai religious and mythical iconography as well as the importance of flower garlands, food, architecture and traditional dance, the author uses his background as a scholar in Asian arts to inform his understanding of the culture and people of Thailand.

#### **The Mekong: Turbulent Past, Uncertain Future** (*Milton Osborne*)

A cultural history of the great river from prehistory to European exploration, colonial tensions and modern challenges. An engaging read, the book weaves an interesting narrative of the great river and its influence on the peoples and cultures of Southeast Asia over two thousand years – from ancient seafaring civilizations to the French explorers who tried to navigate it.

#### **Anna and the King of Siam** (*Margaret Landon*)

Based on the memoirs of Anna Leonowens, this semi-fictionalized biography tells the story of a young widow who was invited by King Mongkut of Siam to teach his wives and children. Anna was swept into a world of exotic beauty, lush landscapes and mystic faiths punctuated by the royal pageantry and ancient customs of the king's palace.

#### **Bridge Over the River Kwai** (*Pierre Boulle*)

Based on events surrounding the construction of the Thai-Burma Railway, this work of fiction tells the story of British POWs forced into hard labor at a Japanese prison camp. Colonel Nicholson, a proud perfectionist, is pitted against the warden, Colonel Saito, in the building of the infamous railway bridge which the Allies race to destroy. A poignant story of duty, honor and survival which was made into an Oscar winning film in 1957.

#### **To the River Kwai: Two Journeys 1943, 1979** (*John Stewart*)

One of the few survivors of the horrific World War II POW camps along the River Kwai returns to the region, interlacing his wartime reminiscences with his experiences 36 years later. As a prisoner, John Stewart kept a diary and his notes serve as a window into the past, offering unique insights into his Japanese captors and the atrocities he suffered along with his fellow prisoners.

#### **Jim Thompson, the Legendary American of Thailand** (*William Warren*)

An engrossing biography of ex-intelligence agent, art collector and Thai silk magnate, James Harrison Wilson Thompson whose disappearance in 1967 has never been satisfactorily resolved. This account offers an insight into the life and times of the American businessman who is credited as having revived the dying Thai silk industry in the 1950s and 1960s.

## **Television and Films**

### **The Railway Man (2013)**

Starring Colin Firth and Nicole Kidman, this film tells the story of a broken man who experienced horror in the hands of the Japanese military as a POW during the Second World War. An emotional portrayal of the prolonged and traumatizing effects of war, the film provides a glimpse of what life was like during the construction of what is now known as the “Death Railway.”

### **The Beach (2000)**

Directed by Danny Boyle and starring Leonardo DiCaprio, this film follows the journey of a young man who escapes to Thailand looking for adventure. The film begins in the hectic, crowded streets of Bangkok and takes the protagonist to the south of Thailand where he hopes to find a secret island. Depicting the beauty of Thailand’s landscapes in all their glory, this film provides an inspiring glimpse of the country’s amazing destinations.

## **Websites**

<https://www.tourismthailand.org>

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/destinations/thailand>

## **Blogs**

<https://www.travelfish.org/country/thailand>

<http://theworldandhistuktuk.co.uk/>

<http://shesimmers.com/>