

Thailand Cost of Living

One of the most important things to take into account when picking a place to live has to be the cost of living. The most wonderful spot on the planet can only be the place to live if you can afford it. The most essential part of a family's budget is food. We cannot live without it and, in the Western world, the cost of food has skyrocketed due to rising gas prices, the extremes in weather and the destruction of crops by natural disasters.

Thailand, with its arable land and seasonal weather, abounds with locally grown, fresh food which makes food preparation easy and low in cost. Both Thai and Western foods are available in local, reasonably priced supermarkets, reducing the cost of food preparation and even making eating out affordable. Living quarters are also available at a reasonable cost if that's what you need or you can find accommodations to match your lifestyle at just about any price. You can live simply and modestly in a lovely, affordable home or you can live the "high life" in a luxurious apartment, condo or house if you have the resources to pay more. Many people find that, for the same amount they paid "back home," they can rent or own a much bigger, more expensive home, even in the "big city" of Bangkok. In the U.S., one of the signs of a well-to-do person is a housekeeper or other servant. Most of the middle-class in America or England cannot afford house-servants but in Thailand, you can hire a full-time housekeeper for less than \$200 a month. Most people who move to Thailand and manage their resources well find they can afford not only a housekeeper but a gardener and a driver as well. But, with such amenities come problems. Dealing with servants can be difficult in your own native country where you all speak the same language. In a country like Thailand, where most of the servants will be foreign-speaking to you, it is necessary to learn the language as much as you can so that you are speaking words they understand. Also, you will have to learn the customs of Thailand's hierarchical society, which keeps the relationship between servants and their employers on a very proper and business-like level. Your house-keeper will not be "one of the family" and would be insulted to be treated as one. As in any country, it is imperative to get good referrals for anyone you hire to work in your home.