

Long haul travellers continue to visit Thailand during current high season

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Bangkok, 15 January, 2014 – Thailand is welcoming large numbers of tourists from long haul markets, including Europe, the UK and the USA, during the current winter season.

Bookings are continuing to come in from long haul markets for the current winter season despite the ongoing anti-government demonstrations and the subsequent international media coverage in recent weeks, according to surveys conducted between this week and the last by Tourism Authority of Thailand's (TAT) international offices.

For the UK market, the TAT London office said there had been a number of inquiries in the past week as to whether the anti-government demonstrations would compromise individual travellers' schedules in the Thai capital.

All inquiries were answered based on the daily updates by the TAT headquarters that it's mostly business as usual in Bangkok, albeit with some street closures in the rally areas. Rather than cancel their bookings, individual travellers from the UK have opted either to stay at accommodation in areas away from the rally sites, such as on the banks of the Chao Phraya River, or reduced the duration of stay in Bangkok for a longer stay in other Thai destinations.

Likewise, surveys with major tour operators in the UK found that bookings for Thailand have been diverted to other beach destinations such as Phuket, Krabi and Ko Samui.

The TAT New York office also reported its surveys with major tour operators in Canada and the East side of the USA found that bookings for Thailand remain intact for the most part. On the West coast of the USA, the TAT Los Angeles office reported similar survey results for the tourist markets in Western USA and Latin America (Brazil and Argentina), but noted a slow pace of bookings from the Chinese American market for the upcoming Chinese New Year holiday in Thailand.

Meanwhile, the TAT Stockholm, Frankfurt and Rome offices have reported a "status quo" for flights from their respective markets. Thai Airways International and major tour operators are

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allowing a change of routing for travellers wishing to avoid Bangkok. All three offices reported a minimal cancellation of 1-2 per cent while the Frankfurt office said new bookings for Thailand continued to flow in from the German market.

The TAT attributed the result to factual news coverage, saying that many big-name international media agencies have tagged the demonstrations as a “festive-like gathering.”

Mr. Thawatchai Arunyik, the Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, said: “Bangkok remains largely open for business, although it may take longer time to travel around in downtown areas. Tourists are advised to use public transport such as the skytrain, the subway and boat services. Nonetheless, despite the peaceful nature of the protests, we still would like to recommend that tourists avoid the rally areas, just to be on the safe side.”

According to statistics released by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Thailand welcomed 26.7 million international tourists in 2013, a 19.6 per cent increase over 2012. Of the total, the USA market contributed 826,350 tourists, representing a 7.51 per cent increase. From Europe, there were 6.3 million visitors (an 11.62 per cent growth), including 906,312 visitors from the UK (up 3.81 per cent) and 744,363 visitors from Germany (up 9.08 per cent).

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- See more at:

<http://www.tatnews.org/long-haul-travellers-continue-to-visit-thailand-during-current-high-season/#sthash.wWY2W8EO.dpuf>

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Les voyageurs long-courriers en provenance d'Europe et des Etats-Unis continuent à visiter la Thaïlande

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