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Travel Scams: The Boat Scam In Bangkok, Hotel Fires in India

Posted by [Aaron](#) in [Advice](#), [Our Stories](#), [Post](#), [Thoughts](#), [Travel Planning](#), [World Travel](#) | [0 comments](#)

This past February, my wife and I were in Bangkok, trying to find something to do in Thailand's capital that we hadn't done before. Seeing the **temples** is a great cultural experience, but seeing them once is enough. Same with **Baiyoke Tower** and the extravagant malls that dot the city. After a little research, we decided to go in search of a long tail boat tour through Bangkok's 'klongs.' What we found instead was a scam.



A long tail boat tour of Bangkok's 'klongs' is a great way to enjoy the city

Though the week had been rainy, the skies looked clear as we set out for the river, so we decided to walk. Nearing the river and where we thought the docks should be, it began to rain so we ran to a nearby covered sidewalk to consult our map. As we were checking our location, a friendly Thai man walked up and asked if he could help.

When we told him that we were on our way to book a river cruise, he exclaimed, "Oh, that's great! I am also in town, visiting with my wife and mother, and we just took the long tail river tour yesterday and loved it! Would you like me to show you where the dock is?"

We were delighted to be get the inside scoop from a local as our newfound friend pointed out the spot on the map and offered, "We got a great deal for our tour – only 2,000 [Thai] Baht for an hour cruise." He then hailed a tuk tuk (a three-wheeled Thai motorcycle taxi) for us. When he had told the tuk tuk driver where to go and bargained for a reasonable price for us, we sped off in the rain.

En route, my wife and I started to wonder about our accommodating friend. Most of what we had read indicated that hour-long boat tours should only run between 400-500 Baht, so "a great deal of 2,000 Baht" seemed pretty fishy, especially from a local Thai person who would have a much better grasp on fair pricing.

Pulling up to the docks, our driver enthusiastically showed us where the sales counter was, adding to our suspicions. After a brief conference, the two of us decided to leave and head to the original dock we had read about. As we walked past the tuk tuk driver who was still waiting nearby, seemingly to keep an eye on us, he asked where we were going and then politely encouraged us to stay. At this point, we felt confirmed in our suspicion that we had been targeted for a scam.

This was not my first experience with travel scams, but for some reason it was more disheartening than others in the past. Some places, such as India, are known for laughable and outrageous scams, such as "What hotel are you staying at? Oh, I'm sorry to tell you that your hotel has burned down, let me show you another option." However, my experience with Thai people has always found them to be honest and "neighboring," making an elaborate ruse that plays on Thailand's well-known hospitality saddening.

The worst part about travel scams is not the money that is swindled, but the fact that awareness of the scam can sour a person's opinion of a whole group of people or even a whole country. My opinion of India has certainly been influenced by the number of scams I have witnessed there, and if I had not had so many pleasant experiences in Thailand, that might well have been the case there, too.

Two words of advice for fellow world travelers are these:

1. Being as informed as possible, both about common local schemes and about activities, prices, and locations you are visiting, can go a long way in keeping you from being an unsuspecting victim of fraud, and,
2. While every destination has its share of dishonest racketeers, most of the people you come across in other cultures are genuinely helpful, so don't miss chances to interact with lovely individuals because of a fear of being scammed.

Travel Scam Information:

[Travel + Leisure – World's Worst Travel Scams](#)

[Lonely Planet – Buyer beware: 10 common travel scams](#)



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better yet, combine the two. Currently, he lives in Asia, where he is working on his 4th language and keeping an eye out for new adventures.

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"Travel can also be the spirit of adventure somewhat tamed, for those who desire to do something they are a bit afraid of." - Ella Maillart

"We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty, charm and adventure. There is no end to the adventures that we can have if only we seek them with our eyes open." - Jawaharlal Nehru

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