

THE ANSWER

Follow signs down to Basement B1: the Airport Rail Link - 45 THB (~1 GBP), 25-30 min to the city, immune to Bangkok traffic.

Big bags or landing after midnight? Level 1 official taxi queue: take a ticket, insist on the meter - 350-550 THB all-in to Sukhumvit.

EVERY WAY OUT - REAL PRICES

Airport Rail Link ***BEST FOR MOST***

45 THB

25-30 min to Phaya Thai (BTS link), 35 THB to Makkasan (MRT). Basement B1, tokens cash only. ~05:30-00:00.

Public taxi (Level 1 queue)

350-550 THB

40-60 min door-to-door. Ticket machine, Gates 3-7. Meter 250-400 + 50 THB airport surcharge + 25-75 tolls (you pay tolls - normal, not a scam).

Grab / Bolt

350-600 THB

Fixed app price, card payment. Pickup Level 1/2. Surges in rain and rush hour; scarce 01:00-04:00.

S1 bus (to Khao San)

60 THB

Direct to Old Town / Khao San Road. Level 1, Gate 7, 06:00-20:00, every 30-60 min.

Pre-booked transfer

650-1,400 THB

Fixed price, name board, no queue. Worth it for 3+ people, late nights, first-timers.

AOT 'Limousine' desks

900-1,600 THB

Official premium desks in arrivals. Legitimate but 2-3x the Level 1 taxi queue for the same journey.

THE TRAPS - WALK PAST THESE

'Meter broken' / flat-rate taxi offers

A flat 800 THB quote or a 'broken' meter = double overcharge. Queue taxis **MUST** use the meter by law. Walk away, take the next cab. Surcharge + tolls on the meter are legit; flat fares are not.

Touts inside arrivals

Anyone approaching you saying 'taxi? taxi?' is unlicensed or overpriced. Real airport taxis never approach you - Level 1 queue, numbered bays.

Arrivals-hall SIM counters

Tourist SIMs at 299-599 THB; the same data costs half that in any city 7-Eleven. Use free airport Wi-Fi, buy in town, or install an eSIM before flying.

Arrivals-hall currency exchange

Worst rates in Bangkok right after customs. Walk down to B1 - the counters near the ARL entrance (Superrich etc.) are famous for near-city rates.

KNOW BEFORE YOU WALK

- ARL tokens are cash only - break a big note at a landside convenience store before going down to B1.
- Landing after midnight? ARL has stopped. The Level 1 taxi queue beats a 40-min Grab wait.
- Rush hour (07:00-09:00, 17:00-20:00): road can take 90 min, the train takes 25.
- Connecting via Don Mueang? Allow 4-5 hours between flights - free shuttle bus for ticketed passengers.