

THE IMPACT OF POST-COUP BOOKING FIGURES ON THAILAND TOURISM



It has not been a great surprise to find that the Thai coup d'etat of May 22nd has had an impact on Thailand tourism figures for the month of May; total daily bookings on all flights were high on the 19th at more than 25,000, but this plummeted sharply with significant losses into minus figures by the 23rd. What is interesting are the details of these monthly figures - the differences between source markets and the recovery taking place.

Throughout May, long haul flight bookings stayed a lot more steady than those for Asia Pacific flights.

It is clear that it was these more local, Asia Pacific routes that were responsible for the nosedive into minus figures around the time of the coup, although the growth rate afterwards was fair. The problem is that extending these figures back into the beginning of May shows a clear decline in interest in the latter, post-coup period of recovery compared to the start of the month. Total variation for the month on all bookings went from -29% for the period of the 1st to the 23rd down to -84% after this date. In the same period, the results for just Asia Pacific flights went from -40% to -92%.

Source markets in long haul and Asia Pacific nations show different trends for the month.

Bookings for long haul markets showed a general trend of a decline, on average -69%, between May 23rd and 25th and a slight improvement at the end of the month. The anomalies in this list were Italy and Spain, where a figure of +19% pre-coup for each nation fell to -760% and -1289% respectively, and Norway, which did not see minus figures during this initial post-coup period but saw a later decline of -249%. Results were similar on Asia Pacific routes, again showing a decline during this two day period and slight growth by the end of the month. The difference, however, is that figures were already in the minus area at the start of the month and the coup just made matters worse. Unsurprisingly, China was one of the countries with the biggest decline in bookings (-437%) but it was worse with the Malaysian market with -1017%. Interestingly, Nepal completely bucked the trend by starting on +95% - the only nation on a positive figure - the decline barely crept into negative figures and by the end of the month it was back up to +74%.

The chances of recovery for Thailand tourism.

The signs of recovery are positive in both sectors; long haul bookings did not suffer as badly to begin with and there is steady progress in Asia Pacific bookings. Estimates for expected arrivals have also been reassessed. By May 25th, an 11% drop was expected but this is no longer the case and hopes are rising. The coup was undeniably damaging to Thai tourism but things are perhaps not as bad as first thought as the road to recovery seems reassuringly stable.

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