

THAILAND SLIGHTLY OPENS DOORS TO CANNABIS TOURISM



It was with a simple tweet that the Thai Minister of Health announced the decision taken by the Thai government to allow and legalize the use of cannabis for recreational purposes. Since the end of 2020, Thailand had already allowed the use of cannabis for medical purposes.

Thailand became the first country in Asia to decriminalize the use of cannabis. But this is not an open door to all kinds of trafficking, quite the contrary. **Production and trade will be legal but subject to declaration and controls.** In the meantime, it will be necessary to wait a period of 120 days after the publication of this new law, before it comes into force.

In the meantime, visitors who are tempted to take advantage of cannabis tourism are advised to be extremely cautious, as they would find themselves in a grey zone where no one knows if they could be accused of committing an offence and possibly fined and arrested. When asked about this, the Thai police themselves confirmed that they were not sure how to handle it.

The main lines of the bill are quite simple. Recreational use of cannabis is allowed, as well as possession for personal use, thus in limited quantities. Every Thai can grow cannabis for personal use.

Farmers embarking on cannabis cultivation will have to register with local prefectures and only those with an official license will be allowed to trade.

On the other hand, everything that could be similar to trafficking will be strictly forbidden. In other words, the "nice" tourist who would be caught walking around with, for example, 1 kg of weed can be sure that Thailand will be pleased to offer him room and board for a few years in one of its prisons whose charm and comfort is known to all.

Unlike countries like the Netherlands which have really opened up the cannabis tourism and trade, Thailand, in view of the needs and the now recognized usefulness of cannabis for therapeutic and medical purposes, has chosen a broader option, becoming a highly productive country.

The aim of this legalization is to create a legal framework for cannabis to become an important financial resource for the agriculture of the country, offering substantial incomes to the farmers, which would also have as a collateral effect to limit the rural exodus which is a real plague for the country.

In parallel to the agricultural aspect of the production of cannabis on a national scale, the government is counting on the creation of an industry of SME for the transformation of the raw product, because the derivatives are extremely varied, like oils, drinks, chocolates... and of course, all the CBD-based products that can be exported to all countries, such as those of the European Union, which still have restrictive legislation on the "high" side of cannabis.

In order not to be considered as a narco-trafficking country, Thailand will have to fight effectively against any form of trafficking.

Even if everyone will be able to take advantage of this legislation on the spot, it should not be forgotten that trading is not allowed. It will never be a legal supply point for individuals.

Even if some cannabis lovers will see this as a reason to travel to the country, **the vast majority of tourists will come only for what is the essence of this country: the beauty of its landscapes and its beaches**, the splendor of its temples and its archaeological sites, the delights of its cuisine and especially the kindness of its people.

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