Dusit Park

Sometimes referred to as the New Royal City, Dusit is home to several royal residences and government offices. Dusit Park was created by Rama V (r.1868–1910) in an attempt to emulate parks that he had seen on visits to Europe. The green and shady paths are a pleasure to walk along, with many interesting sights on offer.

Top 10 Features

1. Vimanmek Palace
2. Royal Plaza
3. Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall
4. Abhisek Dusit Throne Hall/ SUPPORT Museum
5. Photographic Museum
6. Royal Elephant Museum
7. Old Clock Museum
8. Ancient Textile Museum
9. Lakeside Pavilion
10. Dusit Zoo

Vimanmek Palace

Possibly the world’s largest teak building (right), this palace was the home of Rama V (see p34) in the early 20th century and contains a huge collection of royal artifacts. Visitors can join a guided tour to see 30 of its 72 rooms.

Royal Plaza

At the entrance to Dusit Park is this large open area dominated by an equestrian statue of Rama V who designed the park. Each year on December 5, the present king’s birthday, the spectacular Trooping of the Colors is held here.

Abhisek Dusit Throne Hall/ SUPPORT Museum

This attractive building is an unusual mixture of Victorian, Islamic, and Thai styles, with some delightful timber latticework around the entrance (left). It contains the SUPPORT Museum, which features jewelry, silk, and wicker items produced by a charity foundation set up by Queen Sirikit to promote traditional crafts. The throne hall is used for royal receptions.
Photographic Museum

Rama IX (see box) is a keen and accomplished photographer and examples of his work are on display here.

Royal Elephant Museum

The former stables of the king’s white elephants house this museum (left), which features pachyderm paraphernalia such as howdahs, sacred ropes, and mahouts’ amulets. There are photos of the king’s white elephants, as well as a model of a current favorite. White elephants in Thailand all belong to the king.

Old Clock Museum

The splendid table, wall, and grandfather clocks on display here were commissioned or acquired by kings Rama V and Rama IX on their trips to Europe (below).

Ancient Textile Museum

This museum displays a range of fabrics favored by the court of Rama V, such as Shanghai brocade silk, gold brocade cloth, and satin. There are also textiles produced by Queen Sirikit’s SUPPORT Foundation on display here.

Dusit Zoo

Covering 47 acres (19 hectares) and housing over 300 mammals, 300 reptiles, and 1,000 birds in its grounds, this is one of Asia’s better zoos. Some varieties of tropical flora are still cultivated here, originally the private botanical gardens of Rama V. The lawns, lakes, and wooded glades are ideal for relaxing strolls. At weekends it gets crowded with families wandering, snacking, and taking boat rides (see p46).

Lakeside Pavilion

Overlooking a tranquil stretch of water is a delightful lakeside pavilion. Decorated with ornate carvings, it is occasionally used for performances of Thai dancing (below).

The Thai Royal Family

Rama IX (see p35) is the world’s longest reigning monarch, having acceded to the throne in 1946. He has initiated many projects to improve the lives of his people. Although Thai monarchs have always been treated like demi-gods, it is remarkable in this modern era to see the devotion the Thais have for their king.