



# Aftershocks Start to Shake Thailand's Tourism Sector

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8 April 2025

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## KEY SUMMARY

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### **The Mega Earthquake on March 28 Begins sending aftershock through Thailand's Tourism Sector**

According to the preliminary data from the first two days after the mega earthquake indicates that approximately 1,100 hotel bookings were canceled across the country, with significantly in Bangkok. In addition, a survey conducted by the Thai Hotels Association on April 3, 2025 shows that advance bookings for the Songkran festival (April 11–17, 2025) have dropped by approximately -25% compared to last year. This is reflected safety concerns, resulting in foreign tourists to closely monitor the situation before making travel decisions to Thailand. Furthermore, governments in several countries have updated their travel advisory for Thailand following earthquake by advising their citizens to monitor local media and follow instructions from local authorities.

### **SCB EIC's initially assessed earthquake would be rapidly affected Thai tourism in short term. The number of foreign tourists this year is projected to decline by approximately 200,000 to 700,000 throughout the recovery period.**

Case 1 – Better Case: Foreign tourists in April decline by approximately -9% MOM, with a recovery period of around two months. As a result, total foreign tourists in 2025 are projected to fall short of the original estimates by about 195,000 throughout the recovery period, resulting in an estimated loss of revenue from foreign tourist spending of approximately THB 9.53 billion.

Case 2 – Base Case: Foreign tourists in April decline by approximately -12% MOM, with a recovery period of around three months. Under this scenario, total foreign tourists in 2025 are projected to fall short of the original estimates by about 420,000 throughout the recovery period, resulting in an estimated loss of revenue from foreign tourist spending of approximately THB 20.6 billion.

Case 3 – Worse Case: Foreign tourists in April decline by approximately -15% MOM, with the recovery of around four months. Under this scenario, foreign tourists in 2025 are expected to fall short of the original estimates by about 680,000 throughout the recovery period, resulting in an estimated loss of revenue from foreign tourist spending of approximately THB 33.0 billion.

Nevertheless, the tourism sector still has the potential to recover sooner if the government acts effectively to restore foreign tourist confidence. SCB EIC's original projections of 38.2 million foreign tourists in 2025 will be revised once more information about the tourism outlook available.

**Urgently restoring foreign tourist confidence in safety, coupled with promptly implementing various domestic tourism stimulus measures, will be key to accelerating the recovery of Thailand's tourism sector.**

The government should urgently restore foreign tourist confidence by conducting safety inspections of hotels and high-rise tourist attractions. At the same time, proactive communication should be made to ensure that foreign tourists can access clear and reliable information. Additionally, the rapid development of mobile emergency alert system is essential so foreign tourists can receive timely updates and be properly prepared for any unforeseen incidents. Furthermore, instantly implementing domestic tourism stimulus measures—such as the “We Travel Together” program—can help mitigate the impact from the slowdown in foreign tourists, while also boost to domestic economic activity.

## KEY POINTS

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**The recent earthquake is expected to rapidly impact on Thailand's tourism sector in the short term, with a likely slowdown during Q2. However, the sector is projected to return to normal in the second half of the year.**

The mega 8.2-magnitude earthquake centered in Myanmar on the afternoon of March 28 sent strong tremors across several regions of Thailand, causing widespread impact—including in key tourist destinations such as Chiang Mai and Bangkok.

Although airports nationwide resumed normal operations with no tourists stranded—after being temporarily closed for over an hour—and most foreign tourists still in Thailand were able to return to their accommodations after initial safety assessments of high-rise hotels, the earthquake has nonetheless had an immediate effect on foreign tourist confidence, particularly during the first two weeks after the incident.

**The earthquake has begun sending aftershock to Thailand's tourism sector**, as reflected in hotel cancellation reported by the Thai Hotels Association in the two days after the earthquake, with approximately 1,100 bookings canceled nationwide. According to hotel operators, the majority of these cancellations are in Bangkok.

In addition, a survey of advance bookings for the Songkran festival (April 11–17, 2025), conducted on April 3 by 52 Thai Hotel Association members, showed that advance bookings had dropped by

approximately -25% YOY. Chonburi experienced the steepest decline at around -67% YOY, followed by Bangkok (-32% YOY), Surat Thani (-19% YOY), and Chiang Mai (-11% YOY).

This shown that foreign tourists still closely monitoring the situation in Thailand before making travel decisions. Part of this may be linked to updated travel advisories issued by several governments including United Kingdom, Singapore, and Canada. These governments have advised their citizens who plan to travel to Thailand should monitor local media and follow instructions from local authorities strictly. Additionally, the Irish government has raised Thailand to “High degree of caution”, the Australian government to “Level 2: Exercise a high degree of caution”, and the Macao government has issued a “Level 1 Travel Alert”, to alert citizens who plan to travel to Thailand during this period.

**In the past, earthquakes in major tourist destinations across Asia—as well as natural disasters previously experienced in Thailand—have typically impacted the tourism sector for no longer than three months** referring to historical data on similar-magnitude earthquakes in Asia. For instance, a 6.6-magnitude earthquake in Hokkaido, Japan, in September 2018 led to a drop of over 420,000 foreign tourists in that month—or a decline of around -16% MOM, which was higher than the average seasonal decline of -8% MOM. However, foreign tourists could rebound to normal levels within two months as major destinations like Tokyo and Osaka were unaffected by the earthquake. Moreover, the 7.4-magnitude earthquake that struck Taiwan in April 2024 resulted in a sharper contraction of approximately 200,000 foreign visitors in that month, or a -25% MOM decline—substantially higher than the seasonal decrease of around -13% MOM. Caused a stronger earthquake than in Japan and a centre closed by Taipei ( just 156 kilometers away), it took nearly three months for foreign tourists to return to pre-quake levels.

In Thailand, past natural disasters have also had short-term impacts on tourism. For example, the tsunami at the end of December 2004, affected six southern provinces—Phuket, Phang Nga, Ranong, Krabi, Trang, and Satun, resulted in a decrease of foreign tourists by approximately 290,000 in January 2005, or around -26% MOM. This was contrary to the normal seasonal trend, where foreign tourists in January typically increase by 2%–4% MOM. Nonetheless, foreign tourist could recovered to normal levels within three months.

Similarly, the major flood in late 2011—which also affected Bangkok—led to a decline of about 130,000 foreign visitors in November, or around -9% MOM. It was contrary to the normal seasonal growth of 10%–12% MOM. However, in this case , foreign tourists returned to grow at normal level within two months.

**Although the recent earthquake in Thailand was less severe than those in Hokkaido, Taiwan, or the tsunami, it is still expected that foreign tourists in 2025 will decrease by approximately 200,000 to 700,000 throughout the recovery period.** SCB EIC has conducted



an initially assessment the impact of Thailand's tourism sector as of April 1, 2025 in three scenarios— Better case, Base case, and Worse case—based on two key assumptions: (1) a decline in foreign tourists in April 2025 is higher than the seasonal average of around -6% MOM during 2023–2024, and (2) the duration of the recovery period. Therefore, earthquake would effect on the original forecast of 38.2 million visitors. Nevertheless, the tourism sector still has the potential to recover sooner if the government implements effective measures to restore foreign traveler confidence, and the forecast for foreign tourists will be revised once the further information of tourism situation is available.

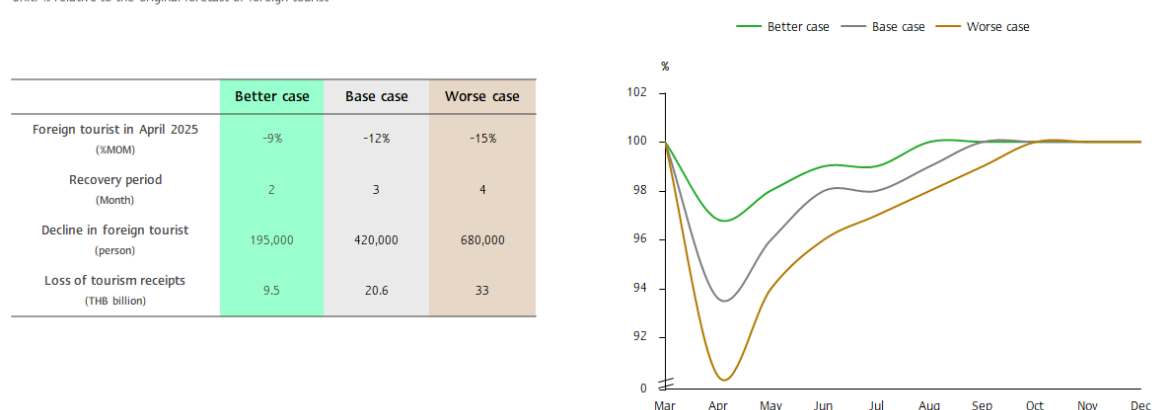
**Case 1 – Better Case:** Foreign tourists in April decline by approximately -9% MOM, with a recovery period of around two months. Under this scenario, total foreign tourists in 2025 would fall short of the original forecast by about 195,000 visitors throughout the recovery period, resulting in an estimated loss of revenue from foreign tourist spending of approximately THB 9.53 billion.

**Case 2 – Base Case:** Foreign tourists in April decline by approximately -12% MOM, with a recovery period of around three months. In this scenario, total foreign tourists in 2025 would fall short of the original forecast by about 420,000 visitors throughout the recovery period, resulting in an estimated loss of revenue from foreign tourist spending of approximately THB 20.6 billion.

**Case 3 – Worse Case:** Foreign tourists in April decline by approximately -15% MOM, with a recovery period of around four months. Under this scenario, total foreign tourists in 2025 would fall short of the original forecast by about 680,000 visitors throughout the recovery period, leading to an estimated loss of revenue from foreign tourist spending of approximately THB 33.0 billion.

**Figure 1: Estimated Impact on Foreign Tourists and Recovery Period Under Three Scenarios**

Projected impact on Foreign tourist numbers  
Unit: % relative to the original forecast of foreign tourist



Source: SCB EIC analysis based on data from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

**Urgently restoring foreign tourist confidence in safety and swiftly implementing various tourism stimulus measures following the earthquake will be key factors to boost the tourism sector returning to normal growth sooner.**

**Accelerating the restoration of tourists' confidence in safety will be key to encouraging the return of foreign visitors to Thailand.** The government should urgently audit high-rise hotels and tourist attractions—not only in earthquake-affected areas such as Bangkok and Chiang Mai, but also across the country. At the same time, proactive communication also helps to acknowledge foreign tourists that Thailand's high-rise buildings are required to comply with seismic-resistant building standards (DPT 1301/1302-61), issued by the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning under the Ministry of Interior. These standards provide guidelines and requirements for seismic-resistant design, and ensure buildings can withstand earthquake-induced vibrations which are closely aligned with international standard. To further restore tourist confidence, authorities should ensure public easily access to information about buildings that have passed safety inspections. The government may consider introducing a certification mark or visual symbol for verified buildings to enhance clear communication and gain a understanding among foreign tourists. In addition, the government should expedite the development of an emergency alert system capable of issuing timely warnings to foreign tourists in high-risk areas. Such a system would not only help tourists prepare for potential emergencies but also serve as an effective communication channel for disseminating official information.

**In addition, implementing domestic tourism stimulus measures can help boost the tourism economy,** especially as it may take time for restoring tourist confidence to fully recover at normal levels. promptly implementing initiatives such as the We Travel Together program can help cushion the impact of declining foreign tourists, while also act as a key driver of domestic economic activity.

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