Expat Property Buying Guide: Pattaya 2026

Your definitive guide to safe, legal, and profitable real estate investment in Thailand — by **Seaboard Properties Pattaya**.

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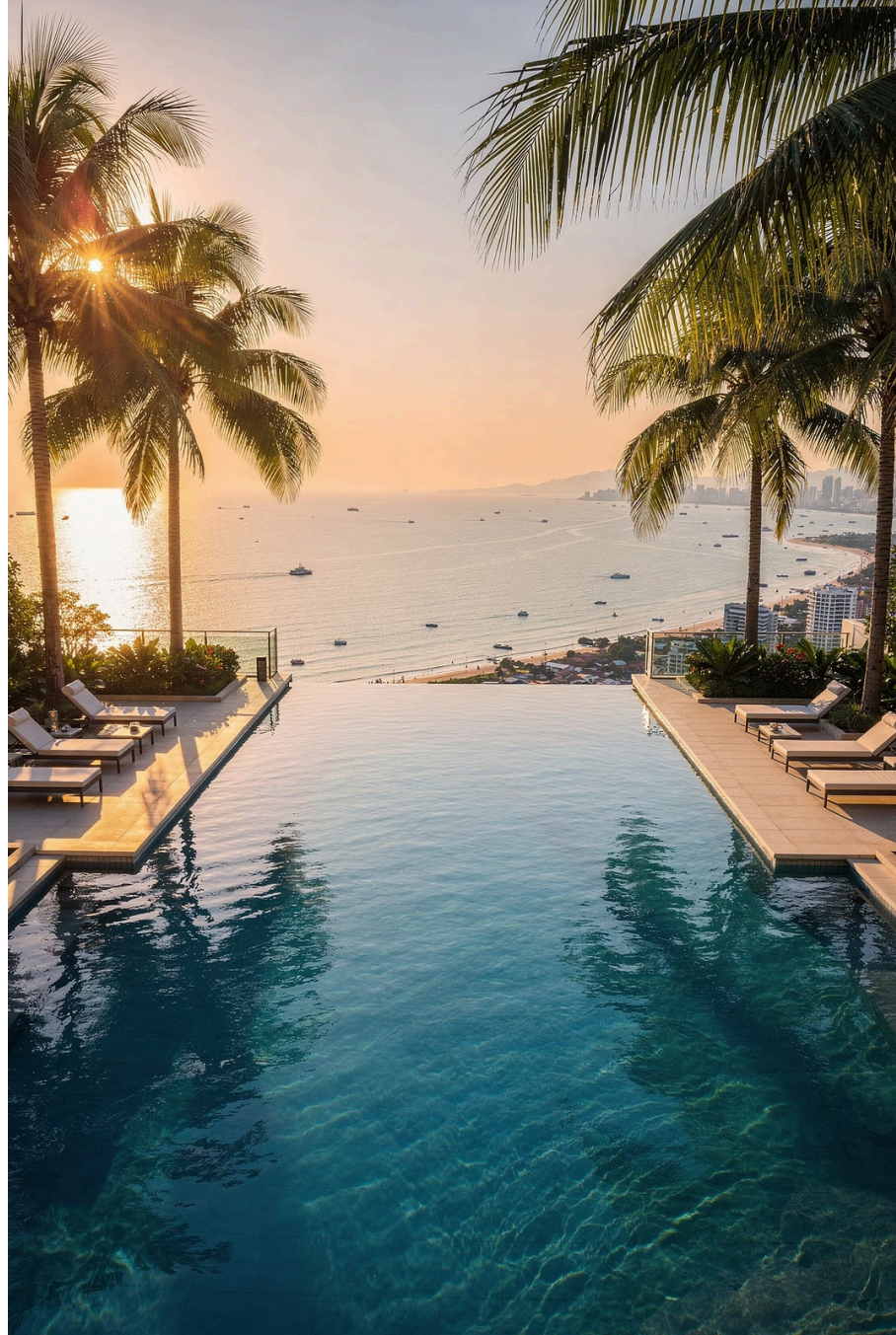


What Can Foreigners Actually Buy?

Thai land law is clear: foreigners cannot own land outright. But there are fully legal, government-backed ownership structures — and Pattaya offers some of Thailand's best opportunities.

🏢 Condominium Freehold

The safest route. Under the Thai Condominium Act, foreigners can own up to **49% of a building's total residential area**, freehold. Your name goes directly on the Chanote title deed — full ownership, no strings attached.

🏡 Leasehold Villa

A **30-year lease** registered at the Land Office, typically with two additional 30-year extensions. Officially recorded on the Chanote and legally binding.

🏢 Thai Company (Co. Ltd.)

Set up a Thai company holding 49% of shares. Using Preferred Shares and serving as Director, you retain **full control**. A common, well-accepted structure — but solid legal advice is essential.

For most investors, a freehold condo is the easiest, most secure option and simplest to resell. Villas suit lifestyle buyers wanting a garden or private pool.

Title Deeds: Only the Chanote Matters

Thailand has multiple land title types, but there is only one you should ever accept: the **Chanote (Nor Sor 4 Jor)**.

GPS-Measured Boundaries

The Land Department measures boundaries precisely using GPS and marks land with concrete pillars.

Official Garuda Seal

The front bears the official government Garuda seal — the mark of full legal recognition.

Complete Ownership History

The back records full ownership, mortgage, and transfer history — total transparency.

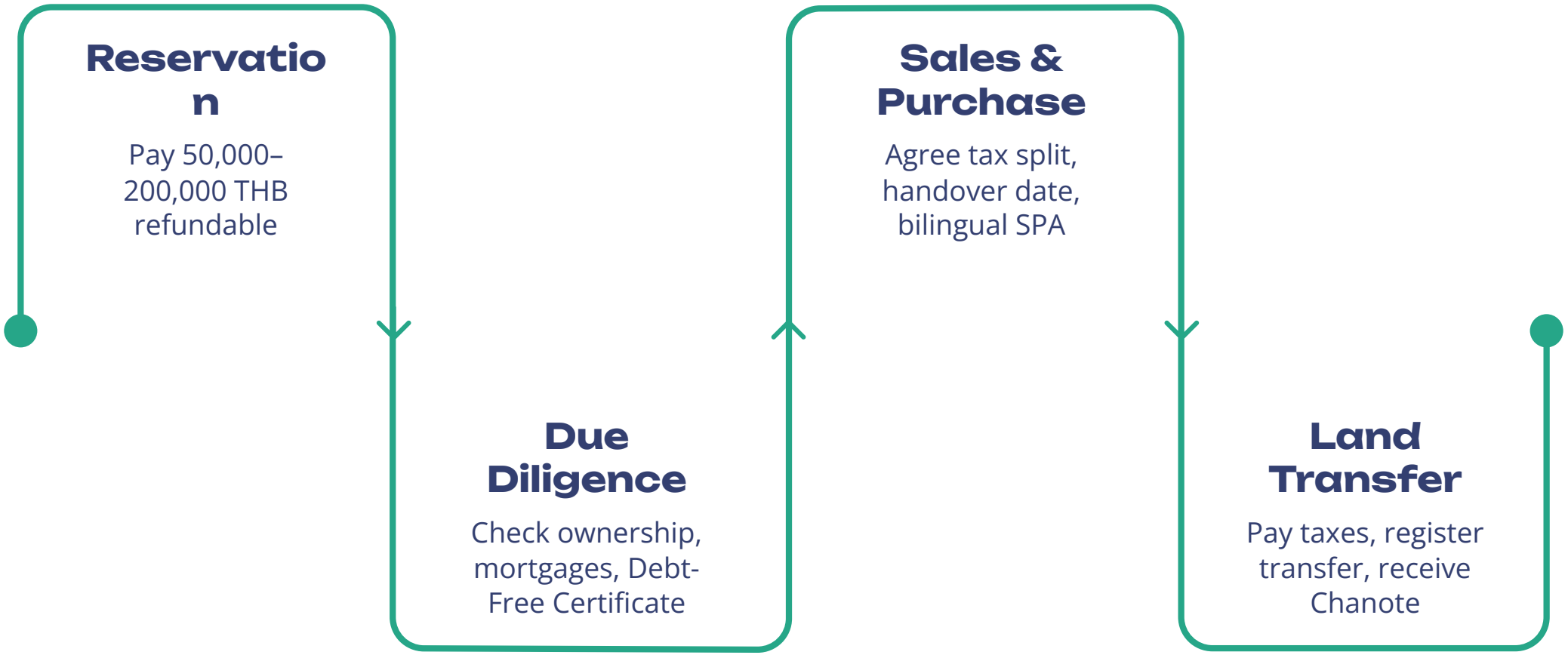
All Transactions Recognized

Mortgages, inheritance, and transfers are all legally recognized under the Chanote.

⊗ Never accept Nor Sor 3, Por Bor Tor 5, or any other land document. These are not legally safe for foreign buyers and cannot transfer freehold ownership.

The Secure Buying Process: Step by Step

Follow the proper sequence — skipping steps is how buyers get burned in Thailand.



Each step builds on the last. Completing due diligence before signing the SPA protects you from hidden mortgages, legal disputes, and unpaid CAM fees — the most common traps for foreign buyers.

Taxes, Fees & Transaction Costs

Thailand's Land Office fees are shared between buyer and seller — the **"Golden Rule of Thai Real Estate."** Budget approximately **2.5–3.15% of the purchase price** for your share of Land Office costs.

Fee	Rate	Who Pays
Transfer Fee	2% of assessed value	Split 50/50
Specific Business Tax (SBT)	3.3% of sale price	Split 50/50
Stamp Duty (if no SBT)	0.5% of sale price	Split 50/50
Withholding Tax	~1% of sale price	Split 50/50

CAM Fees

40–80 THB/m^2/month. Covers pool, security, gym, lifts, and building maintenance.

Electricity

~4–5 THB per kWh, billed directly from the government utility (PEA).

Sinking Fund

One-time charge at purchase: 500–700 THB/m^2. Funds major building repairs.

The FET Form: Don't Let This Block Your Purchase

When buying a freehold condo, you must prove to the Thai government that your funds came from overseas. This requires the **Foreign Exchange Transaction (FET) form**, issued by your Thai bank. Without it, the Land Office will not register you as the foreign owner on the Chanote — **no exceptions.**

1

Transfer from Abroad

Send purchase funds from your home country in a foreign currency (EUR, USD, GBP, CHF, etc.).

2

Convert in Thailand

Allow the money to convert to Thai Baht only **after** it lands in your Thai bank account.

3

Receive the FET Form

The bank issues it automatically after conversion. Keep it safe — you'll need it at the Land Office.

Why Pattaya Leads Thailand's Property Market in 2026

Three structural advantages make Pattaya uniquely stable and attractive compared to other Thai markets.

Year-Round Season

Unlike Phuket — with tough monsoons and 3–4 month slow periods — Pattaya stays busy all year, delivering **steady rental income** with no dry spells.

Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC)

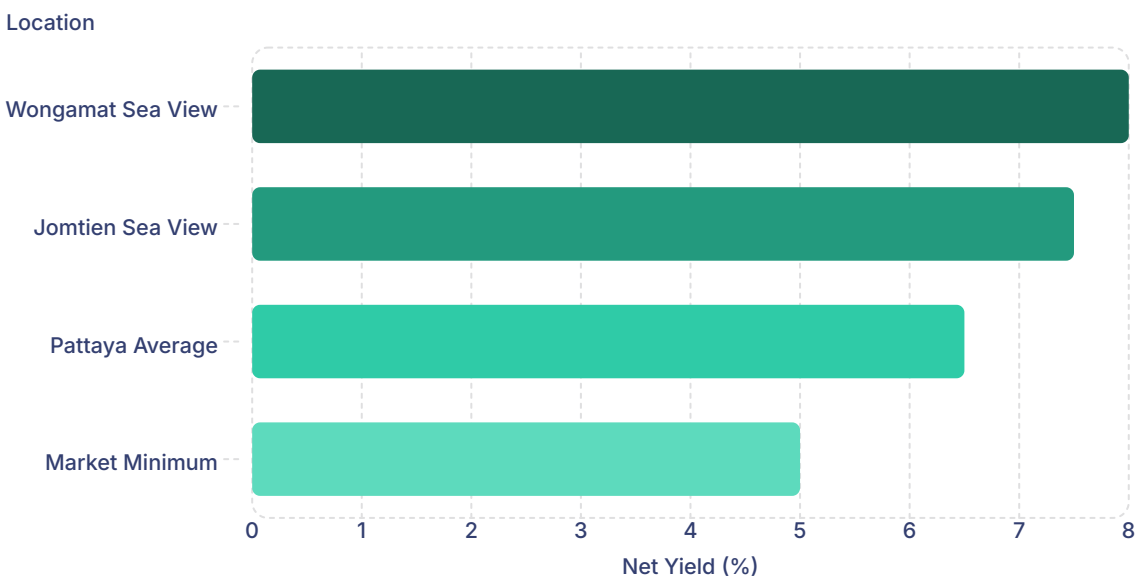
Thailand's flagship infrastructure project is transforming the Eastern Seaboard. U-Tapao Airport expansion and fast rail connecting Bangkok are **driving land values up** across Pattaya.

Bangkok's Weekend Hub

Wealthy Thais from Bangkok drive consistent demand for weekend homes in Pattaya — keeping the market stable and **resale fast**.

Pattaya Rental Yields: The Numbers

Well-located condos in Pattaya deliver strong, consistent returns. Sea-view units in **Jomtien and Wongamat** reliably beat market averages.



Key Takeaway

Pattaya's average rental yields range from **5% to 8% net per year** for well-located condos — among the strongest in Southeast Asia for foreign investors.

Combined with year-round occupancy and EEC-driven capital appreciation, the investment case is compelling.

Common Mistakes Foreign Buyers Make

The difference between a successful purchase and a costly mistake often comes down to avoiding these pitfalls.

1

Accepting the Wrong Title Deed

Only a Chanote guarantees full legal protection. Never accept Nor Sor 3 or other inferior documents.

2

Skipping Due Diligence

Always verify ownership, mortgages, and unpaid CAM fees at the Land Office before signing any agreement.

3

Sending Money the Wrong Way

Funds must arrive from overseas in foreign currency and convert in Thailand — or you won't get the FET form.

4

Ignoring Total Cost of Ownership

Factor in Land Office fees (2.5–3.15%), CAM fees, sinking fund, and ongoing utilities before calculating ROI.

Security Through the Right Partner

Buying property in Thailand is an incredible way to build wealth and upgrade your lifestyle — **if you follow the rules.** The legal framework is clear, the Pattaya market is strong, and the returns are real.

> The difference between winners and losers? Having a professional, local partner that brings clarity, does strict due diligence, and guides you securely to handover.

Legal Clarity

Full guidance on ownership structures, title deeds, and FET compliance.

Strict Due Diligence

Land Office checks, debt-free certificates, and SPA review on every deal.

Local Expertise

Deep Pattaya market knowledge — from Jomtien to Wongamat and beyond.

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