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*Joshua Eliot, Jane Bickersteth*  
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**Joshua Eliot, Jane Bickersteth : Bangkok the Beaches Handbook (Footprint - Travel Guides)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bangkok the Beaches Handbook

(Footprint - Travel Guides):

Thailand is an Asian cliché. Exotic, inscrutable, hot, Oriental, delicate, sumptuous... Take the first few hours of an average visitor's arrival in Bangkok. Off the plane and into a gleaming new airport terminal. Liling Thai voices, and a strange alphabet. Into the city along an elevated highway in the company of an apparently deranged taxi driver with a magic diagram inscribed on the roof of his car, a picture of a long-dead king lodged reverently in the tachometer, a cheap gold Buddha glued to the top of the dashboard, and a garland of plastic frangipani hanging from the rear-view mirror. Out of the taxi and into a quiet, cool hotel with copies of the Asian Wall Street Journal artfully arranged in reception and CNN in the bedrooms. Or into a small guesthouse run by a Thai bobbing to Bob Marley and offering sweltering rooms the size of chicken coops for the price of a dozen eggs. While most people do touch base in effervescent Bangkok, and some grow to love the city, for many it is just a means to an end, a way station en route to the islands, beaches and towns of the south. With 2,614 km of coastline, there's a lot of potential. But, while many come to Thailand in search of a simple hut on a quiet beach, the challenge is to find one before the next person - or the next 10,000 people - get there. The pace of change is sometimes bewildering. Bear in mind that in the early 1970s Phuket was a forgotten backwater. But it is still possible to find simple bungalow accommodation for a couple of dollars a night, and probably a quiet beach, clear waters and an empty hammock.