Introduction

Los Angeles can now lay claim to having the largest concentration of Thais outside of Thailand itself. The community’s business and cultural center is Thai Town, several blocks along Hollywood Boulevard—in East Hollywood. Here, Angelenos transplanted from Thailand, and their children and grandchildren, can see signs written in the unique Thai alphabet, hear Thai spoken—and sung—and enjoy the tastes and scents of their homeland. It is also a place where non-Thais can find help in acculturating themselves to the global city that L.A. is ever in the process of becoming.

Look for the Signs: Thai and Armenian Scripts

Thai writing derives from a South Indian script that came to Southeast Asia more than 1600 years ago. It is phonetic, consisting of 42 consonants and 31 vowels. Armenian writing was adapted from the Greek alphabet at roughly the same time and consists of 31 consonants and seven vowels. Comparisons of the two are rarely made, but in Los Angeles, where Thai Town and Little Armenia overlap along Hollywood Boulevard, it is possible to see signs in Thai next to signs in Armenian.

Related Reading

*We the People: Asians in the United States (2004)*
By Terrance Reeves

Online Library: C 3 205/8-3:17
Also available at purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS61564

*Thai, An Essential Grammar (2002)*
By David Smyth

Doheny Memorial Library: PL4163.S64 2002

*Oxford-River Books English-Thai Dictionary*
Translated by Parimā Manlikamāt

Doheny Memorial Library (Reference): PL4187.E5094 2010