

**SAMUTPRAKARN CROCODILE  
FARM**



*Peter Hemenway*

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The Samutprakarn Crocodile Farm just outside of Bangkok, Thailand was built in 1950 as Thailand's first crocodile farm and today it is the world's largest, housing over 60,000 crocodiles.



At the same time when dinosaurs existed, about 250 million years ago, the crocodile also appeared. Crocodiles are among the most ancient species of vertebrates and have barely changed in over 200 million years.

Crocodiles are closely related to dinosaurs and birds and establish a link between these two species.



Crocodylians have had prominent roles in the myths and legends of various cultures around the world. This is a rock carving of a crocodile on a 4,000 year old sarcophagus in Alk Renung Sumbawa, Indonesia. Some of the kings in Timor were said to have come from the crocodile.



The Sanskrit word Makara basically means sea dragon and makara is the Hindu word for crocodile. These carvings at Wat Sri Sawai in the Sukhothai World Heritage Historical Park show a sea dragon image with a head that is similar looking as a crocodile's head. The figure below shows a crocodile figure with a human type head.





Crocodiles have the strongest immune system in the world. They are also able to hold their breath underwater for as long as an hour due to the unique oxygen carrying capacity of the crocodiles hemoglobin.



The bite of a crocodile can reach as much as 5,000 pounds per square inch, which is over ten times the power of a great white shark.





The reason the crocodiles mouths are open is because they do not have sweat glands and release heat through their mouths.



The rear feet of crocodiles are webbed while the front are not. They tuck their feet to the side when swimming. The webbed feet allow them to make sudden movements in the water and make fast turns with the assistance of their tails. Larger crocodiles have sharp and powerful claws.



They are carnivores and eat their food without chewing, as their jaws are unable to move sideways. They swallow whole chunks of food after using a ripping motion tearing meat off their prey with their powerful jaw bites.



Some species of crocodiles can grow to be over 20 feet and can weigh more than a ton.



The fourth tooth on each side of the lower jaw sticks up over the upper lip in crocodiles, while in alligators the the upper jaw is wider and the teeth are not exposed.

The image below shows knives made with teeth of the crocodiles for the handles.



Seeing over over 60,000 crocodiles makes for a long day; better get ready to go back to the city to get a hotel...



Peter Hemenway  
Samutprakarn Crocodile Farm  
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