



# SEE ASIA DIFFERENTLY

CAMBODIA LAOS VIETNAM THAILAND BURMA INDONESIA



## THAILAND HOLIDAY INFORMATION PACK

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Thank you for choosing to travel with See Asia Differently. We hope that you have a fabulous holiday and return home with some wonderful memories of this incredible region and we look forward to hearing all about it!

This Holiday Information pack has been designed to help you get even more out of your Cambodian holiday with us. We are here every step of the way to assist you; so, if you have any further questions that are not answered in this pack then please get in touch with your Sales or Customer Services representative.

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## About Thailand

Previously known as Siam, located in the centre of the Indochinese peninsula in Southeast Asia, Thailand, occupies a total surface of approximately 513,000 square kilometres; it is now classified as the world 51<sup>st</sup> biggest country and is the 20<sup>th</sup> most populated country on the planet with a population of 65 million people.

There is a reason Thailand is so popular amongst travellers, as it has it has something for everyone. To the north, you will find the charming and relaxing cities of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Pai; at its centre Bangkok – Thailand's capital city – is south-east Asia 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited city and a central travel hub for the region, the city is a mixed bag of old and new and displays a fascinating clash of cultures. However, the highlight of the country lies to the south. The islands populating the region are filled with pristine beaches, crystal clear water and world class luxurious resort. It is no wonder why millions of travellers decide to make Thailand their holiday destination of choice every year.

## A Brief History

The first evidence of human inhabitants in Thailand date back to 40,000 years ago. Like its neighbouring countries, the culture, and beliefs of India heavily influenced Thailand. Starting all the way back with the Funan Kingdom in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE to the Khmer empire, which ruled over Thailand in its early days. The Hindu influence can be felt to this day among Thais.

### **Khmer Influence (9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Century)**

The Mon civilization known as Dvaravati, occupied Thailand's western and central regions from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Mon shared a similar heritage as the Khmers in southern Burma and spread their religion, art, and language to the northeast regions of the country, primarily in the cities of Lopburi and Kanchanaburi.

### **Sukhothai Era (1238 -1438)**

Overshadowed by the Ayutthaya Kingdom in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, The Sukhothai Kingdom was founded in the year 1238 by Tai Chieftain (Khun Pa Muang). It is traditionally considered to be the first Siamese State prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Although the kingdom was short lived, this era was the most prosperous period in the country and has had significant impact on the country's history. Their writing system created by King Ramkhamheng, who ascended the throne after the death of Khun Pa Muang in 1279, as evolved into today's Thai alphabet.

### **Ayutthaya Era (1350 -1767)**

Founded in the year 1350, the city state of Ayutthaya established its capital in 1351 on the Chao Phraya River. The name Ayutthaya was derived from the Indian city of Ayodhya. In effort to distinguish his kingdom from the Hindu Angkor Kingdom, King Uthong –Ayutthaya's first ruler – declared Theravada Buddhism as the official religion of the country. Later, he compiled a legal code based on Hindu legal texts and Thai custom which remained in effect until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Kingdom entered its Golden age and flourished peacefully before its capital city and was destroyed by the invading Burmese forces in 1767.

### **Thon Buri Era (1767-1782)**

Thai general Phraya Taksin, proclaimed himself king after defeating the Burmese invaders who had invaded the Ayutthaya Kingdom. He then established a new capital at Thon Buri, located across the river to modern day Bangkok. By 1781 Taksin had become mentally troubled and was executed in 1782.

### **Rattanakosin Era (1782 -Present)**

In 1782 Taksin was succeeded by general Chakri, whom changed his name to Yot Fa. The court was relocated across the river to the village of Bangkok; the kingdom's economy flourished and what remained of Ayutthaya's artistic heritage was preserved. In this era, the country boomed into what is known today as Thailand (Changed in 1939 from Siam) Defined in Thai as 'Prathet Thai', the term 'Prathet' means 'country' and 'Thai' means 'free'. Relations between the USA and the European nations were established and Schools, Roads, Railways, and the country's first Post office were built; new laws were also put in place to improve the rights of women and children. A bloodless revolution led by army officers took place in 1932, thus ending 800 years of absolute monarchy.

## **Weather**

The region north of Bangkok has three distinctive season, From November to February the weather is dry and cool, dry with relatively high temperatures from March to May, and the monsoon season runs from May to November. The south only has two seasons – the wet and the dry. However, the south's west and east coast do not experience seasons at the same time. The raining season first start on the west coast from April through October and runs from September to December on the East.

In general, it is best to visit Thailand in the months of November to February when the weather is dry and cool. March to May is still a reasonably good period to visit if you don't temperatures as high as 40 degrees with humidity levels of 75% which can feel suffocating especially in cities like Bangkok.

## **Main Festivals**

- January - **Bo Sang Umbrella Festival**
- February - **Chiang Mai Flower Festival**
- March - **Pattaya International Music Festival**
- 13th to 15th April - **Songkran Thai New Year Water Festival**
- June - **Hua Hin Jazz Festival**
- June - **Phi Ta Khon Festival**
- July - **Ubon Ratchatani Candle Festival**

\*Please note that dates of some festivals can change slightly from year to year.

# Before You Leave

## Emergency Contact

### See Asia Differently contact

- Cambodian Office Number – +855 (0)63 966 355
- International Number – +44 (0)208 150 5150
- Cambodian Mobile Number – +855 (0)16 565 496

### British Embassy

14 Wireless Road Lumpini, Pathum Wan, Bangkok 10330, Thailand

Contact Number - +66 2 305 8333

Office Hours: Monday to Thursday (08:00-16:30) Friday (08:00-13:00)

\*Other embassy details can be supplied if needed.

## Visas and Taxes

### *Do I need a Visa to enter Thailand?*

No: Citizens of most EU Countries, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States do not require a visa to enter Thailand.

### *How to get a Thailand Visa?*

If by the small possibility that you do need a visa for Thailand then this can be obtained at your local Thai Embassy. The standard cost is \$15, with the process taking up to 5 days. This would then give you a single-entry visa lasting up to 60 days.

### *Additional Information:*

- Please make sure that your passport does not expire within 6 months of your holiday. And that your passport has at least one full clean page for the visa and another page for additional stamps.
- If applying for a visa on arrival please make sure that you have 2 passport photographs with you.
- For every day, you are in the country without a valid visa you will have to pay a fine per day.
- Please note that you are no longer need to pay an airport departure tax as this is included in your airline ticket.

## Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory for anyone travelling on a 'See Asia Differently' holiday and you will be asked to supply us with your insurance details before travelling. Travel insurance can be acquired from a multitude of companies but it is vital that your insurance is comprehensive and covers you for all aspects of the trip you are taking.

## Health (Vaccinations)

We recommend that you see your doctor or a travel clinic at least 6 weeks before your departure for general advice on travel risks, malaria and vaccinations.

Rather than giving out the wrong advice we have found that [www.masta.org](http://www.masta.org) offers excellent medical advice about recommended vaccinations and malaria advice. With them you can buy a number of useful products including mosquito repellent, malaria tablets and many other forms of travel related products. An alternative you might like to try the Travelpharm.

If you are currently taking medicine or drugs, whether prescription or not, please make sure that you take a sufficient supply to last through your trip. Also ensure that you have insurance for accident and sickness. If you need a doctor while in Thailand, you must be prepared to pay for these services and claim it back on your insurance on your return to your home country. Ensure you keep all receipts and it is recommended that you take a copy of your prescription with you.

## Money, Expenses & Credit Cards

The Thai Baht is the official and only accepted currency in Thailand. We do not recommend you buy Thai Baht currency until you arrive in Thailand. FOREX booths are readily available and offer higher exchange rates, however, bank notes that are torn, ripped, damaged or stamped will not be accepted so ensure to bring notes in good condition.

Banknotes in circulation in the country are 20, 50, 100, 500, and 1000 Baht; coins come in 1, 2, 5 and

There are plenty of ATMs available in Thailand, and most will accept cards from international banking networks (Visa, Mastercard, Plus, Cirrus, etc.). It is advised that you alert your card issuer prior to your travel to avoid any possible decline. Do note that there is a fee of 150 or 180 Baht on top of any fees added by your home financial institution.

## What to Pack

Wear light and airy clothing to protect yourself from the sun during the day and mosquitoes at night. The sun can be quite intense at times so bring a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Carry a lightweight rain coat during the green season in case of an afternoon shower and a warmer but light jacket for the nights in rural and mountainous regions.

Wear practical shoes when visiting temples and monuments, you may climb narrow steps and walk on uneven surfaces. As in all travel in warm climates you pack light and sensibly.

### **Our list of essentials:**

- Passport (with photocopies)
- Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- 2 Passport photographs for visa on entry (bring 4 to 6 as backup)
- USD cash and travellers checks
- Credit or debit card
- Flashlight
- Sun hat, sun block, sunglasses and after sun (just in case)
- Walking shoes/sport sandals
- Waterproof jacket (just in case)
- Camera, additional memory cards and camera charger
- Travel power adapters
- Insect repellent
- First-aid kit (should contain lip salve, aspirin, band aids, anti-histamine, Imodium, or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhoea, re-hydration powder, extra prescription drugs)



## Recommended Reading

We are aware that you may want to do some background reading into Cambodia before coming on your trip, there are many books available but here are the top 3 that we have read:

### **The Beach**

The 1998 book 'The Beach' was the foundation for the 2000 movie of the same name starring Leonardo DiCaprio. The story revolves around Richard, a young westerner whom on his first night in Bangkok, is handed a mysterious hand-drawn map leading to 'the beach' by an overdosing backpacker in his hostel. The book is a must read, particularly if you plan to visit the parts of Thailand where the movie was filmed.

### **Private Dancer**

Private Dancer tells the story of Pete, whom shortly after moving to Bangkok, falls in love with a pole dancer named Joy. However, Pete quickly finds out that the beautiful dancer is not whom he thinks she is.

### **The Bridge Over the River Kwai**

Published in 1942, it was then turned into a movie in 1957. The story follows the internal struggles a prisoner of war during World War II. The bridge over the River Kwai is located in Kanchanaburi city and anyone planning to see the famous bridge owes it to themselves to read this book as it will make the experience much more memorable.

## During your Travel

### Responsible Travel

Thailand is a safe country in which to travel and it is most unlikely that you will find yourself with any problems during your holiday. Just be as careful as you would be in your home country and use your common sense. For example: Don't make it easy for thieves by putting your passport or cash in your back pocket and don't take expensive jewellery with you.

You will be seen as a role model here and you're also an ambassador for yourself and your home country. Set a good example at all times in the way you dress, your behaviour, and your time keeping. Be aware that whilst the vast majority of people and organisations are genuine, there are some known instances where this is not the case. Be aware of mothers asking you to buy them milk powder for their babies. The babies are not receiving the milk and are being exploited so the older children and adults can make money. By returning the milk powder to the shop after the donor has left.

Avoid paying for simple acts of kindness with cash, a thank you is sufficient. Giving money to adults and children promotes a culture of begging, which is not sustainable., don't give money or food to children; if you must do something then a payment for goods or services (postcards or shoeshine) is better, though even better is only transacting with adults.

Dental care is limited in parts of Asia, so it's best not to give sweets or chocolate. If you want to help then supporting local NGOs and hiring local guides and drivers, going to local restaurants, and buying locally are your best contribution.

## Do's and Don'ts

- Do** Smile
- Do** show respect to monks
- Do** avoid showing affection in public
- Do** keep calm no matter the problem
- Do** dress appropriately when visiting a temple
- Do** remove your shoes upon entering a temple
- Do** learn the basics of the language
- Don't** show disrespect towards the Thai Royal Family
- Don't** cross your leg when in the presence of a monk.
- Don't** touch the hair of a Thai person
- Don't** raise your voice
- Don't** sunbathe nude
- Don't** touch a Thai woman

## Language

Here are a few words that we have spelt out phonetically to help you on your way:

- **Hello** – Sawasdee
- **Thank you** – Khob khun
- **Yes** – Chai
- **No** – Mai
- **No thank you** – Mì penrì Khob khun
- **Good morning** – Sawasdee Dtaawn Chao
- **Goodbye** – La con
- **Good night** – Ra-trii Sawat

### Numbers:

<b>1</b> – Nung	<b>6</b> – Hok
<b>2</b> – Soong	<b>7</b> – Jet
<b>3</b> – Saam	<b>8</b> – Bpeet
<b>4</b> – Sii	<b>9</b> – Gao
<b>5</b> – Haa	<b>10</b> – Sip

## Food and Drink

Although similar, to its neighbouring countries. Thai food is all about the fine tuning of 3-4 disparate tastes to create a harmonious meal. Portions are generally small but accompanied by several other dishes, each targeting a different taste buds (sour, sweet, salty, bitter, and spicy). Over the years, Thai cuisine as steadily become one of the most popular cuisine in the world.

During your time in Thailand we highly suggest you try the following dish: tom yam goong, pad Thai, som tam, massaman curry, green curry, Thai fried rice, and moo nam tok. In 2011, these dishes were classified on the 'World's 50 Most Delicious Foods' list.



## Tiping, Bartering & Tuk Tuk's

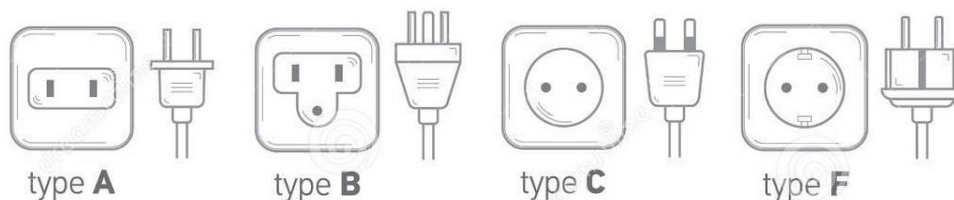
Unlike in Europe and America, Indonesia doesn't have a specific rule on tipping. It is up to you how much you tip, generally tip is not expected. Tip if you feel that your experience has been enhanced but don't leave too much as sometimes can be seen slightly insulting. Saying this some there are few exceptions, tourist guides and porters traditionally rely on tips to build up their wages.

Prices of goods in supermarkets, pharmacies, restaurants, hotels, official transport, basic commodity shops and so on, are usually fixed. When in local markets don't be afraid to barter most of the shop owners will at least double their price. Keeping your sense of humour is most important and remember that no shop owner will sell you something at a loss. Always think of your ideal value before you start to barter. For Rickshaws, Tuk Tuk's, Moto's and all Taxi's in Asia, always bargain first and make sure that you agree on the price before you start the service.

## Electricity

The Electrical current in Thailand is 220 volts; 50Hz. Electrical sockets accommodate both flat prongs (U.S and Canada) and round prongs (Europe and Asia). The power supply is relatively stable in the big cities however, power outages are quite common.

### Power Sockets in Thailand:



## Communications

Phone code in Thailand is +66.

The Thai mobile phone market has three main operators - AIS, dtac and True Move H. Sim card are easily acquired in Thailand and can be bought at any 7-Eleven or at one of the airport kiosks upon arrival. If you buy from AIS, you will pay 299 baht (\$10) for a card with 1.5GB of data valid for seven days. However, we suggest you go around the Airport Kiosks and look for a package befitting your needs as there are a lot of packages with validity period ranging from a day to a month.

The easiest solution is for you to create a Skype or WhatsApp account before you leave home, however the internet is not great in many parts of the country outside the cities. The best solution however is to leave all your worries and technology at home and completely switch off.

## Our Recommendations

We believe that in parts of your holiday you should follow your instinct as to where to eat, drink and what to do in your spare time as people's tastes vary dramatically. However, in this section we have listed a few of our favourite places to give you a helping hand.

### Bangkok

Bangkok being as big as it is, makes it impossible for us to list the hundreds of restaurants, cafes, and bars available to you. However, here is 6 of our favourite places to go:

### **Nami Teppanyaki Steakhouse**

If you are looking for the best Teppanyaki in town then look no further. With an excellent ambience, incredible food and great showmanship by the chefs, you are sure to walk out of the Nami Teppanyaki Steakhouse fully satisfied.

### **Savelberg Thailand**

Savelberg Restaurant is Renowned Dutch Chef Henk Savelberg first restaurant in Thailand. With a chef as talented as Savelberg at the helm, it is hard not to walk into the Savelberg Restaurant with sky-high expectations. However, the Michelin star awarded chef absolutely delivers and you are in for a treat.

### **Ama**

On the cheaper end of the spectrum you have Ama, a Thai restaurant located on Maha Rat Road. The restaurant is very simple and offer great tasting Thai food at an affordable price.

### **Riverside Terrace at Mandarin Oriental**

The Riverside Terrace is a great place for an early evening cocktail or diner. As the name implies, the restaurant has a beautiful view of the river, in the morning they also serve a Breakfast buffet with an incredible amount of selection which is very much worth it.

### **Pizza and The City**

No matter where you are in the world, there always comes a time when you have a craving for Pizza. If this is the case for you, then the 'Pizza and the City' is the only logical place to go.

### **Octave Rooftop Loung and bar**

Perhaps the most impressive rooftop bar in Bangkok, the Octave has an incredible sweeping view of the city. A great place for a night out and enjoy some well needed drinks.

## **Chang Mai**

### **Khao Soi khun Yai**

Khao Soi Khun Yai may not look like much, but if you were to judge it by its look, you'd be missing out on the best noodle soup in Thailand. If you do decide to give it a try, the shop is open from 10am to 2pm and last order is at 1:30pm and you can most likely expect to wait as the place is very popular amongst locals.

### **Tikky Café**

The bohemian inspired aesthetic of the café, its friendly staff and incredible Thai food, all come together to create a unique dining experience. To top everything off, prices are low and portions generous.

## **Pattaya**

### **Le café des Amis**

If there is one thing that is sure is that Le café des Amis most definitely deserves its #1 spot on tripadvisor. There really isn't much to say about this place other than it is absolutely fantastic.

### **Livv finest food & drinks**

With a varied and affordable international menu, the Livv finest food is another great choice for a dinner outing in Pattaya. We particularly recommend you try the Salmon egg, you won't regret it.

### **Five Star J Vegetarian Restaurant**

With an extensive menu, the Five Star Restaurant is a serious contender for best vegetarian restaurant in Pattaya.

## Hua Hin

### Sea Harmony Eco Café

A beautiful and small café tucked away in a cozy corner of the Khao Ta Kiab area. The food there is delicious and very well presented, vegetarians will be delighted to find that they have an amazing vegetarian menu available as well.

### La Paillote

A hidden gem of a restaurant just a short walk from Hua Hin beach. This French restaurant has a pleasant environment and reasonably priced food that is nothing short of delicious and well presented.

### Oceanside Beach Club & Restaurant

The Oceanside Beach Club & Restaurant is located as you've probably guest on Hua Hin's beach front. The view and setting is lovely, food is great and the staff is attentive. We particularly recommend going there to enjoy a few drinks in the evening.

## Phuket

### Green Tamarind Kitchen

If you fancy a mouth-watering burger, then this is the place to go as you won't find better on the island. However, if you don't, the restaurant also has a great selection of Thai food and vegetarian options.

### The Palm Cuisine

The Palm Cuisine has an a la carte menu which focuses on blending authentic Thai cooking with traditional western favourites. The menu selection is not the biggest, however what is there is fresh and you aren't likely to be disappointed whatever your choice.

### O-OH Farm Ta-Eiad

With an affordable and diverse menu, the Oh-Oh Farm Ta-Eiad is a solid choice for Lunch or Dinner for anyone looking to have a healthy and organic meal.