

Let The Adventure Begin



First of all, a big ‘thank you’ for travelling with us and we can’t wait to welcome you to ‘The Land of Smiles’. Thailand is an amazing country and we’re sure you’ll love it just as much as we do!

To help get ready for the big adventure we’ve put together some information that we hope you’ll find useful when preparing and deciding what to pack.

Welcome to The Land of Smiles

Thailand really does have it all; from beaches, mountains, jungles and waterfalls, to wildlife, temples, bustling markets, and some of the tastiest food you can imagine.

Thailand has a year round hot climate, and although it does experience 'winter' it can still feel very hot and humid all year round. When the rainy season comes it can get very, very sticky!

When it comes to eating and drinking travellers often enjoy how cheap day to day life can be, as well as the variety of food on offer. Street food vendors are a great way to experience the real Thailand, trying all the local specialities and not breaking the bank doing so!

Arguably the most rewarding aspect of Thailand, though, is interacting with the people and experiencing the local culture. Over 90% of the population are Buddhist, and you are never too far from a monk or a temple. Thai people are generally very welcoming and the famous Thai smile always goes a long way to making you feel right at home.

What's included?

- Free airport pick-up on arrivals day between 06:00 and 22:00 from BKK airport.
- Accommodation for the duration of your stay, including two nights in a guesthouse in Bangkok for your arrival
- Guided Bangkok tour
- Transfer to your programme location
- Bangkok orientation and localised programme orientation
- Daily transfers to and from your programme location
- Full support from our local team in your programme location
- 24-hour emergency support

What isn't included?

- Your flights
- Meals (very cheap in Thailand!)
- Visa
- Travel insurance
- Activities in your 'down time' from the programme

Welcome To Bangkok

Your First 2 Days

On arrival in Thailand our friendly and dedicated team will meet you. We will help get you checked into the hotel, right in the heart of Khao San Road. Here you'll have chance to get to know our team as well as the other travellers and enjoy a fun filled evening on the famous Khao San Road.

The next morning you'll have an orientation that explains in more detail what is to come over the coming days and weeks. After orientation we'll then take you on a tour of Bangkok including a long tail boat down the river, stopping off at the incredible Temple of Dawn and the huge Reclining Buddha at Wat Pho.

The second evening gives you another opportunity to take in the sights of the Khao San area, and the following morning it's time to journey to your programme location. Accompanied by our team, you will travel by coach or train to your destination.

Welcome To Bangkok

Accommodation

The accommodation in Bangkok is at local guesthouse in the Khao San Road area. Bars, restaurants, ATMs, convenience stores, pharmacies and busy markets are all within walking distance.

Rooms in Bangkok are basic but clean, and all have air-conditioning and a Western toilet. A buffet breakfast is included and there is free WIFI available in the reception area. You will be sharing rooms with other travellers in the group, either on a twin room or triple room basis.

Once out of Bangkok the accommodation is then either in similar guesthouses or dormitory style shared houses. Dormitory rooms are all equipped with fans.

What Should I Pack?

It will be slightly different for everyone, but we've put together a handy list of things you'll want to consider bringing with you:

- Copies of your important documents such as: passport, airline tickets, insurance, CRB check.
- Appropriate clothing! It gets very hot in Thailand so you'll want your shorts, t-shirts and flip flops. However, do also be aware that Thailand is a fairly conservative country, so bring some long trousers and shirts too. You will need to dress more conservatively if you are planning to visit temples where it is very important to cover up your knees and shoulders!
- Bring some sturdy footwear. Flip flops are great for wandering around town in, but not always the best if you want to go trekking and probably not always appropriate for your programme either
- A hat and sunscreen – it's important to protect yourself from the sun!
- Small medical kit including plasters, headache tablets, ant-histamine cream, and diarrhoea medication
- Mosquito repellent
- Towel
- Plug adaptor for South East Asia (two pin plug)
- An MP3 player and a good book for those longer journeys

Safe Travels

We want to do everything we can to ensure you have an enjoyable stay in Thailand. An important part of this means staying safe, so here are some things to be aware of before you travel:

- **Vaccinations** – Thailand is very safe indeed, but as with any hot and humid country there are health risks and viruses that we may not be used to back at home. Contracting anything is very rare, but it's always best to check with experts before you travel to get the latest and most up to date medical advice. Visit your local travel clinic or your local doctor before travelling to check if you do need any vaccinations or anti-malarials. We suggest doing this as far in advance as you can, as some courses of vaccinations can take several weeks to complete.
- **Food** – Trying the local food is always a fun part of travelling, but it's common to have the odd upset stomach. The fact is that the local people suffer the same and it's nothing to panic about. Generally, it's important to keep hydrated, keep your energy levels up and make sure you eat properly.
- **Water** – Tap water is not safe to drink so please only drink bottled or filtered water. It's very easy to buy bottled water throughout Thailand and it's very cheap too
- **Alcohol** – Please drink in moderation. Remember that it's very easy to become dehydrated, especially in the heat of Thailand, and so your tolerance to alcohol may be lower than normal
- **Drugs** – Extremely strict drug laws for possession or use. The penalties are severe. Drug use of any kind is not tolerated on any of our experiences.

Safe Travels (continued)

- Motorbikes – Riding a moped or motorbike is a common way for locals to travel around, and motorbike taxis are commonplace. Renting a motorbike when traveling through Thailand may look fun, but the fact is that it's incredibly dangerous and Thailand does in fact have one of the highest road traffic accident fatality rates in the world. We strongly recommend you avoid using motorbikes.
- Crime levels are no different to at home, and so please be as cautious as you would at home. Don't leave your belongings on show or unaccompanied, and please don't 'show off' your spending money.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much money should I bring with me?

This can vary from person to person but in general the cost of food and day-to-day items is relatively cheap. 5000THB per week would allow you to live comfortably and enjoy a few nights out too!

Do I need travel insurance?

It's essential! Please ensure you have insurance before traveling. You can book travel insurance through many online travel agents.

Are there any public holidays I need to know about?

There are a lot of public holidays throughout the year, and their dates tend to follow the lunar calendar and so change each year. This may mean that your programme schedule changes from time to time so please be flexible!

What if I have a problem or concern once I'm in Thailand?

Our team are all experienced and passionate about travel and are always on hand to make sure you feel safe and have a good time.

Frequently Asked Questions...

Do I need a visa to enter Thailand?

It depends on where you are from and how long you are staying! Please read our visa guide for the latest information

What happens when I arrive? How do I meet up with everyone?

We will make sure you have a hassle free first day and help you get checked in to the guesthouse as well as meeting up with the other travellers. Just follow the arrival instructions in this guide.

Are there any cultural considerations I need to know about? Any do's and don'ts?

The main thing to be aware of is dress code. Thailand is pretty conservative so try and cover up where possible. Obviously it's very hot, so shorts and t-shirts are absolutely fine, but try not to dress for the beach when walking around towns and cities! What you wear at your project will depend on your day-to-day activities.



Healthcare In Surin

The Healthcare programme in Surin really is an unforgettable experience and is a great opportunity for you to get to know the real Thailand. Based in a rural province of Thailand you'll get the chance to work in a small community clinic under the guidance of fully qualified local staff.

Surin is a typical, vibrant Thai town and whilst not as developed as many Western towns it is packed with character and charm. The people are friendly, the food is tasty, spicy, and cheap; and spending time here will be an unforgettable and authentic Thai experience!

Accommodation In Surin

The accommodation in Surin is in shared, dormitory style accommodation in our Thai houses close to the centre of town.

The rooms are clean and comfortable, and all rooms are equipped with fans. The bathrooms are shared with your fellow travellers and have Western style toilets. There is a kitchen for you to use, and of course the accommodation has WIFI!!!

The accommodation is close to convenience stores, a supermarket, a pharmacy, ATM's and lots of local street food vendors and small restaurants

Mosquito nets are included for all and the windows have mesh mosquito screens.

The team are all based very close to the accommodation and are always on hand to help out should you need any assistance.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Arrival day. Meet your fellow travellers and our team, enjoy the sights and sounds of Bangkok

Day 2 – Orientation and Bangkok Tour. A great day sightseeing and then spend an evening on the famous Khao San Road

Day 3 – Transfer to Surin! You and your group will take the train to Surin. Taking around 8 hours it is an experience in itself. Sit back in the air conditioning and enjoy the journey! Be sure to take plenty of photos as you watch the Thai countryside go by!

Day 4 – 7 – The Healthcare experience begins! You will be picked up at a designated meeting point each morning and driven to the medical program, around 30 minutes away. You will be given time to settle in and discuss with our team and the clinic staff exactly what you can help with and what you would like to observe. An average day would run from 8am to 3pm.

The activities can vary from day to day and will depend on the needs of the patients and the clinic.

Day 8 – Free day! Time to relax, unwind and explore Surin! Our team will be happy to help you organise activities and let you know the best places to visit in Surin and the surrounding area.

Return travel to Bangkok is not included, but our team will help you make arrangements. If you are staying for more than one week you will have the weekends to relax and explore. All weeks on the programme follow the same format: Monday to Thursday at the program, with Friday, Saturday and Sunday free to soak up life in Thailand!

Day-to-Day Activities

The clinic is of huge importance to the local community and your help makes a real difference. Exactly what you help out with may depend on your medical background. It also depends on how many members of the local community are coming in to the clinic at any given time. Please be flexible and adaptable as every day may be different to the last.

General day to day duties include:

- Participating in general health checks, blood pressure, weight and BMI
- Screening for Diabetes
- Helping to educate people about health risks and healthy living
- Participating in the school health check program, including educating young students about the importance of basic hygiene healthy living
- Depending on your medical qualifications and experience, you may be able to assist the local staff in diagnosing illnesses and offering advice on treatments. This is subject to the agreement of the Thai professionals on site.
- Packing the medication and medical materials
- Observing and learning from the professional staff working at the clinic

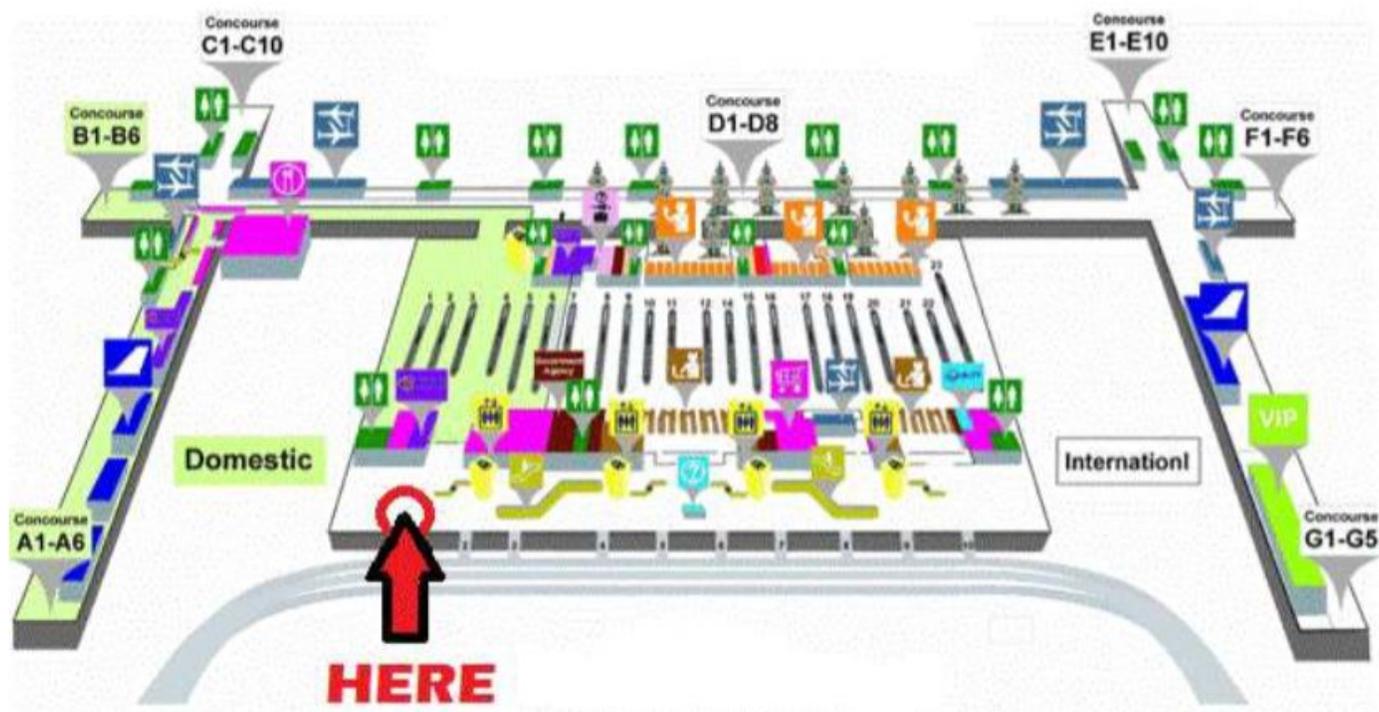
Climate

As with the rest of Thailand, Surin can feel hot and sticky all year round. March and April are the hottest months of the year, whilst May to September is when most of the rain comes. November to January and February are the cooler and drier months of the year.

During the winter months of November to February it can get chilly, especially in the morning and evening so be sure to bring along an extra sweater or jacket.

Airport Pickup – Suvarnabhumi (BKK)

Provided that you arrive into Suvarnabhumi (BKK) Airport on your official start date between 06:00 and 22:00, we will collect you from the airport.



- Once you're off the plane, head for passport control. Please make sure you have filled out your arrival card before getting in the queue for immigration. In almost all cases your flight attendants will give your arrival card to you – if not you can find immigration cards in the airport near passport control. Your arrival card will look something like this.
- You may be asked for the address of your hotel by the immigration officer and will also need to fill this in on the arrival card – let them know you'll be staying at Khao San Road in Bangkok. Don't worry this is just a formality – but you may get some stern looks from the immigration official if you forget to fill this in or don't know where you're staying your first night! 
- You'll have your passport stamped and be issued your departure card. Take a moment to check that your exit date stamped in your passport is correct. Most tourists will be granted a 30 day stay in Thailand, but if you have applied for a Visa – your stay may be longer. The exit stamp is final and can't be amended once you leave the counter. Also make sure your departure card is safely tucked inside your passport – you'll need to return the departure card when you leave Thailand.
- Once you have cleared passport and immigration control (this can take some time – up to an hour or more as Suvarnabhumi airport can be very busy) you will be able to collect your luggage from the carousel.
- After collecting your luggage proceed to customs control. You'll most likely want to follow the **green** line for 'nothing to declare'
- This will bring you into the main arrivals area of the airport on level 2. Directly opposite you will see numbered exits leading to the outside (the numbers are on the glass doors). 
- Our team will be waiting for you at our meeting point which is at Exit 1

- Exit 1 is the far right hand side of the arrivals terminal and approximately 5 minutes' walk away. But don't worry, unlike the more crowded areas of the airport – there's plenty of seating and the odd coffee shop there so you can rest soon! ^[L]_[SEP]
- Once you exit the green customs channel turn immediately turn right and keep walking! As you walk, the numbered exits (on the glass doors) should be now on your left as you walk down and you will pass a series of shops and service desks. One of these is the TrueMove Mobile Phone desk. This is a great place to pick up a Tourist SIM for your phone. ^[L]_[SEP]
- To get to Exit 1 please follow directions for Gate A, the Domestic Arrivals area. ^[L]_[SEP]
- You'll know you're in the right place as you will soon see the brightly coloured purple bank SCB and the green Kasikorn Bank straight ahead, as well as a large seating area just in front of the Domestic Arrivals Gate. ^[L]_[SEP]
- A member of our team will be waiting for you nearby at Exit 1 and will be holding the company logo as a sign. If you can't see your guide – don't worry. Just give a call and they'll help you. Sometimes travellers are so jet lagged they have been standing right next to the guide and not seen them! ^[L]_[SEP]

Some Common Questions

Q. What do I do if I get lost or I can't find the guide at the meeting point?

A. If you have problems finding our staff at the airport: don't panic! You've most likely had a very long flight and we understand that arriving into Thailand may be a little overwhelming – Suvarnabhumi is an extremely busy airport and doesn't have the most intuitive design, after all! Simply give our dedicated Arrivals Line a call and our friendly customer support staff will help you.

Q. What do I do if my flight has been delayed?

A. We monitor your flight status based on the flight number you provide. If you've booked an airport pick up, don't worry we will always have a member of our team waiting to collect you when you arrive.

Q. My flight isn't direct and I've missed my connection. I will be arriving on a different flight and/or another time.

A. Please notify our support team as soon as possible to make them aware. They will then advise you on what to do next. We will do everything possible to ensure that our team will still collect you when you finally arrive.

Some Common Questions...

Q. I am unable to use my phone to make a call. Can I send an e-mail, facebook message or tweet to you instead?

Our dedicated customer support line is manned 24 hours a day and is the most reliable method of communication. We cannot guarantee that e-mails, facebook messages or tweets will be responded to outside of working hours. If you are unable to make a call, Payphones are available at the airport and you can request the use of a phone from customer service representatives at the Airport Information desks. Also PAYG SIM cards can be purchased in the arrivals area.

Q. My luggage didn't arrive with me...

A. Occasionally this happens and can seem quite stressful. However don't worry. Please contact the ground team for your airline in the first instance. They will then be able to assist you and give you all the information you need. Please also notify our customer support team who will be able to assist with getting any essential belongings you will need and will also liaise with you and the airline to reunite you with your luggage as soon as possible.

If you require any further information or would like to discuss the details of your programme prior to your arrival, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

Visa Information

This document is to help you with your visa to Thailand. Visas aren't the most fun aspect of the travel experience! But hopefully with this information, you will feel at ease with the whole process.

Please Note: It is **YOUR** responsibility to ensure that you enter Thailand with the correct visa or entrance stamp. The information provided here is simply to help you as much as possible. We assume that you will arrive into Thailand with the correct documentation permitting you to stay in Thailand for the duration of your program.

Please Note: Visa details change frequently in Thailand. Certain nationalities have different immigration agreements with the Kingdom of Thailand. Some embassies even have their own unique approach and application requirements. We've done our best to make sure the information here is applicable in most cases, but please **ALWAYS** contact your local embassy for the latest information. Contact information for your embassy can be found here: <http://www.thaiembassy.org/main/>

Please do not overstay your visa, doing so may affect your chances of revisiting Thailand and you will be fined. Overstaying your visa may also result in your arrest.

What Visa Should I Apply For?

Please **ALWAYS** state your **PURPOSE** of visit as **TOURISM**

Staying in Thailand Less Than 30 Days

Many of our travellers will qualify for the **VISA EXEMPTION** upon arrival in Thailand via the airport. This permits a stay for up to 30 days and is sufficient for the majority of cases. You will **NOT** need to apply for a visa and will be issued a **FREE** 30 day stamp automatically upon arrival in Thailand at the airport. Currently the following nationalities qualify.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Argentina | 13. France | 25. Kuwait | 37. Peru | 49. United Arab Emirates |
| 2. Australia | 14. Germany | 26. Laos | 38. Philippines | 50. United Kingdom |
| 3. Austria | 15. Greece | 27. Liechtenstein | 39. Portugal | 51. United States |
| 4. Bahrain | 16. Hong Kong | 28. Luxembourg | 40. Qatar | 52. Vietnam |
| 5. Belgium | 17. Hungary | 29. Macau | 41. Russia | |
| 6. Brazil | 18. Iceland | 30. Malaysia | 42. Singapore | |
| 7. Brunei | 19. Indonesia | 31. Monaco | 43. Slovak Republic | |
| 8. Canada | 20. Ireland | 32. Mongolia | 44. South Africa | |
| 9. Chile | 21. Israel | 33. Netherlands | 45. Spain | |
| 10. Czech Republic | 22. Italy | 34. New Zealand | 46. Sweden | |
| 11. Denmark | 23. Japan | 35. Norway | 47. Switzerland | |
| 12. Finland | 24. Korea | 36. Oman | 48. Turkey | |

Please Note: You may be asked for proof of your flight out of Thailand within 30 days. You may also be asked to prove you have funds of at least 10,000THB per person during your stay. In our experience, it is uncommon but they are the rules.

If your nationality isn't listed above. You will most likely need to apply for the 60 DAY TOURIST VISA (details below) but please contact your local embassy for further clarification.

Staying in Thailand For up to 60 Days

If you are staying in Thailand for longer than 30 days, up to 60 days, (or you don't qualify for the visa exemption rule) then you will need to apply for a **TOURIST (TR) VISA** before your visit to Thailand. Please contact your local embassy for details on how to apply. Typically this involves applying in person at the embassy or via postal application. Turnaround time could be from same day (in-person) up to several weeks - so it's important to get this sorted as soon as possible.

When applying for a tourist visa, certain documents and fees are needed to obtain one. The documents and the fee are subject to change anytime and without prior notice so again always check with your local embassy what documents they need.

Documents required by ALL embassies:

- ✓ *Passport or travel document with a validity not less than 6 months*
- ✓ *Visa application form (filled out)*
- ✓ *Two recent 4x6cm. photograph of the applicant*
- ✓ *Visa Fee. (This is paid in local currency so will vary depending on the country your applying in. Typically the cost is around 1000-1500THB approx. 25GBP)*

In the past sometimes our travellers have been asked for additional documents like:

- ✓ *Round-trip air ticket or e-ticket (paid in full)*
- ✓ *Proof of financial means (20,000THB per person)*
- ✓ *A covering letter/ Program Itinerary*

It's not difficult to obtain a TOURIST (TR) VISA for Thailand as long as you can supply all the necessary paperwork. However it is important that the application form be filled out correctly.

Once you have submitted the completed form and provided all the necessary paperwork you will need to hand over your original passport. Don't worry this is normal and you will get your passport back. However it may take up to two weeks to get your passport with the new visa back so please allow enough time for this before you intend to travel.

When you receive the visa please make sure all details are correct. Your Visa should look a little like the sample below:



This is the number of trips your visa is valid for.
Single Entry = 1, Double Entry = 2

This is your visa number you will need to record on your arrival card.

PLEASE NOTE: You must ensure that you leave Thailand before your visa expiry date, failure to do so could result in severe penalties.

Thailand is in the middle of changing the visa rules and are tightening up on travellers who overstay. It is therefore essential that you do not overstay your visa or you may be heavily fined, banned from entering Thailand again in the future or worse.

Upon Arrival in Thailand

Regardless of whether you have **30 DAY VISA EXEMPTION** or **60 DAY TOURIST VISA** you will be asked to fill out an arrival card. Filling out this form will make the process at the immigration counter much smoother.

Once you've landed you will need to proceed to the immigration counter and hand over your arrival card and passport to the immigration officer. Once the immigration officer has looked over your passport you may be asked questions such as what are you doing, where will you stay etc. Don't worry this is part of the routine. Simply explain that you are a **TOURIST** and let them know some of the places you might want to visit and that you will be staying in Bangkok first. They will then stamp your passport.

Please Note: ALWAYS check that the date stamped in your passport matches up either to your **30 DAY VISA EXEMPTION** or your **60 DAY TOURIST VISA**. Sometimes it's so busy at the airport the Immigration officer may not have seen your visa page in the passport and stamp your exit date passport incorrectly. The stamp is final and cannot be changed once you've left the immigration desk! So take a few moments to make sure it's correct as it's virtually impossible to change once you've left the immigration counter.



Somewhere in your passport you'll find a stamp like this. Before leaving make sure your **ADMITTED UNTIL** date is correct. If you have a **30 DAY VISA Exemption** the date will be **+29 days**. If you have a **60 DAY TOURIST VISA** it will be **+59 Days**.