

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELLING TO THAILAND

SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Although the climate varies throughout Thailand, you can visit all year round.
- The best time to travel is during the cool and dry season between November and early April.
- The rainy season in Thailand varies from region to region and is largely dominated by the monsoon. Very broadly speaking, Thailand's rainy season can be classified as May to October, where you'll find great deals. For most of Thailand, the wettest months are usually August-October.
- The Gulf Coast of the southern peninsula (e.g. Ko Samui, Ko Pha Ngan) can be affected by the south-west monsoon, which can lead to heavy rainfall in November and the beginning of December.
- Thailand's average climate ranges from 30°C at its lowest in December and up to 36°C from January to April.

WHAT TO PACK

- Regardless of the time of year when travelling to Thailand, you should make sure you pack the following in addition to your usual travel essentials:

Slip on, waterproof shoes; A water bottle; Insect Repellent; Sunscreen; Rain gear (Rain coat / dry mac); A jersey or tracksuit top; Warm weather clothing; Swimming Costume.

RETAIL HOURS

Shopping malls typically open between 10:00 -10:30 and close between 21:00 – 22:00. They're open seven days a week. Supermarkets are open by 09:30 and also close between 21:00 -22:00, although there are several now in Bangkok (eg: Foodland) that are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

MONEY MATTERS

- The local currency is the Thai Baht.
- Major credit cards are accepted by hotels and large shops, but "hard cash" is the preferred tender almost everywhere.
- Bureau de Change can be found at the airport offering the best exchange rates, but it is also possible to change money at the hotel reception.
- ATMs can found in shopping outlets.

POPULAR SHOPPING OUTLETS

- Bangkok: Siam Paragon, CentralWorld, MBK
- Phuket: Jungceylon Shopping Mall, Phuket Weekend Market, Central Festival Phuket
- Other Regions: Central Kad Suan Kaew – Chiang Mai, Krabi Town Walking Street – Krabi, Phi Phi Market – Phi Phi

DRINKING WATER

- It is recommended not to drink tap water in Thailand, but to buy bottled water.

TIPPING / PORTERAGE

- Tipping is not compulsory in Thailand and is not included in your package. The recommended gratuity amounts in restaurants and bars are between 5% to 10%. Tourist guides THB 200 per day and THB100 for your transfer vehicle driver. Porterage is from THB50.

TRAVEL RESPONSIBILITY

- Learn a few words of the local language so you know what's considered polite in terms of eating, greeting and local values.
- Appropriate behaviours by travellers helps ensure local communities continue to be hospitable and friendly.
- Respect other people's cultures and avoid imposing your beliefs.
- Adhere to the hotel's water or energy conservation policies.
- Buy locally made crafts and support local skills. Buy them preferably from the craftsman himself to ensure your money goes to the artist and not the middle man.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Lock valuables away while travelling and always be vigilant of your belongings. Never leave them unattended.
- Thai is the official language, however English is widely spoken.
- South African passport holders do not require a visa.
- Time is 5 hours ahead of South Africa.
- Smoking is allowed in designated outdoor areas; however it is prohibited in indoor public areas.
- Thailand uses 220V AC electricity. Power outlets most commonly feature two-prong round (like much of Europe), or flat (like in the U.S.) sockets.

WHAT THINGS COST

Costs vary from Local Supermarkets / Street Food Stores and Local Restaurants. The below is a average of local costs

- Bottle of water THB20; Soft Drink THB20; Beer THB60; Bottle of wine THB600; Light lunch THB150; Dinner THB250

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Beware of pick pockets in markets.
- Don't trust beach hawkers selling excursions; these vendors don't always follow the required safety procedures and rarely have the required insurances. It is recommended to rather arrange sightseeing through your hotel or from Thompsons.