



Thailand: Pre-Departure Information and Personal Safety and Security Guidance for Visitors

ASIA REGIONAL

**KNOWLEDGE
SHARING
MEETING**

**FOOD SECURITY RESILIENCE
at the intersection of
DEVELOPMENT and
EMERGENCY**

October 2-4, 2018
Bangkok, Thailand

Before You Leave:

Entry Information:

A passport and visa are required. Travelers may obtain visas on arrival for exempt countries for a stay up to 30 days. For non-exempt travelers who need to secure a visa before entering Thailand, please request an invitation letter from The TOPS Program by emailing events@fsnnetworg.org. For further information, including the list of countries exempt from advanced visa requirements, please go to Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs at <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/12.php>.

Immunizations:

Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Japanese Encephalitis are recommended vaccinations. Travelers are advised to have all routine vaccinations current. Yellow Fever is not recommended though you may need to show a current Yellow Fever certificate depending on the country you are travelling from. Dengue fever is endemic to Thailand. The rainy season, which is the peak time for dengue fever, runs from May to October. Malaria is also endemic to Thailand but only in the border areas (e.g. in the refugee camps on the Thai-Myanmar border). Mosquito repellent is widely available.

Zika Risk & Prevention: Zika is a disease caused by a virus that is primarily spread to people through the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito. Mosquitoes infected with Zika generally bite during the daytime and many people who get infected never have symptoms. In people who get sick, symptoms (fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes) are usually mild and resolve completely. However, Zika can cause serious birth defects in babies born to women who were infected with Zika during pregnancy. Zika is a risk in Thailand. **The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Zika travel guidance now recommends that pregnant women NOT travel to any area where there is a risk of Zika virus infection.** For more information on Zika, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/>.

Embassy Registration:

International visitors are encouraged to register themselves with their Embassies on arrival. Please find the relevant contact information at: <http://mfa.go.th/main/en/information>

Climate and Clothing:

April and May are Thailand's hottest months. The rainy season runs from May to October, with September and October being the height of the monsoon season. The rainy season in the southeast of Thai peninsula runs from November to March. November and December are cool, especially in Thailand's northern areas. Light clothing is recommended, respectful

clothing (trousers, long skirts, covered shoulders) is required for admission into temples. Closed toe shoes should be worn to formal meetings, such as with government officials.

Electricity:

The current is 220V; 50 Hz. Dual-prong rounded plugs as well as flat-pin plugs can be used in sockets. Adaptors are available at most hotels.

Once You Arrive:

Culture and Customs:

Overall, Thai people are very polite; expressions of anger should be avoided. Do not point your feet at a person or touch another person's head. Thai people have a deep, traditional reverence for the Royal Family, and a visitor should be careful to show respect for the Royal Family. If walking in a public place such as a BTS station or some malls and parks at 8 a.m. or 6 p.m., the national anthem will be played and it is expected that all people will stop and stand where they are out of respect. Similarly, the king's anthem is played prior to the showing of all movies in cinemas, and all audience members are expected to stand out of respect while it plays. The lese-majeste law is enforced and the penalty is very severe. The Thai monarchy is to be treated with respect and generally not discussed in public. Avoid publicly discussing controversial issues (politics, religion).

Currency:

Thai currency is called Baht and the current exchange rates are roughly 35 Baht to 1 USD or 45 Baht to 1 GBP. All major credit cards are widely accepted throughout the country. Most foreign currencies and traveler's checks can be changed at banks, hotels, or money exchanges. ATM machines are easily found throughout Bangkok and other major cities in Thailand, especially at airports, shopping malls, and BTS or MRT stations, electronic rails covering a large area of Bangkok. Most of them accept credit cards from US, UK, Europe, and Asia.

Transportation:

The BTS and MRT are electronic rails covering a large area of Bangkok. Fares range from 15-45 Baht. The Airport Rail Link (ARL) is in service from 0600h to 2400h every day, and departs from the basement of Suvarnabhumi Airport every half hour (this is a good option during rush hour if you are already familiar with Bangkok, and are not coming with many bags). Metered taxis are widely available but may refuse service during rush hour. Motorcycle taxis and Tuk-Tuks are also available, but are considered dangerous and not recommended. Thailand has an

extensive bus system as well as numerous budget airlines connecting cities throughout the country.

Use of seatbelts is Mandatory. This applies to front and rear passengers, without exception. Helmets must be worn when on motorcycles.

Accommodation:

The TOPS/FSN Network Asia Regional Knowledge Sharing Meeting is being hosted at The Athenee Hotel (<http://www.theatheneehotel.com/>). While it is recommended that participants stay at The Athenee Hotel, we have created a [list of other hotels in Bangkok](#) you can explore for lodging.

Medical Care:

There is a wide range of private hospitals and clinics, equipped with quality medical practitioners and staff with good English skills. Pharmacies are widely available; the pharmacy 'Boots' is in many malls throughout Bangkok.

Hospital	Address and Phone	Website
Bumrungrad Hospital	33 Sukhumvit Soi 3 Khlong Toei Neua, Wattana, Bangkok 10110 (66)2 667 1188	https://www.bumrungrad.com/thailandhospital
Samitivej Hospital	133 Sukhumvit 49, Klongtan Nua, Vadhana, Bangkok 10110 (66)2 712 7007	https://www.samitivejhospitals.com/en/
Bangkok Nursing Home Hospital	9/1, Convent Road, Silom, Bangkok 10500 (66)2 686 2700	https://www.bnhhospital.com/
Bangkok Hospital	2 Soi Soonvijai 7, New Petchburi Rd., Hwaykwang, Bangkok 10310 (66)2 310 3001	http://www.bangkokhospital.com/index.php/en

Safety and Security:

General Perspective:

Overall, Thailand is a safe country, but like anywhere in the world, it is wise to be cautious. Simple safety precautions include ignoring taunts, keeping away from trouble areas, not wearing excessive jewelry, being careful when crossing roads (remember: left-hand traffic and pedestrians are not given the right of way) and taking care of valuables.

Petty, opportunistic crime and residential theft continue to pose the primary risks to foreigners in Thailand. While there have also been isolated cases of assault and murder, violent crime, including armed robbery targeting foreigners, remains a relatively rare occurrence in the country, and most reported acts of violence against foreigners are a direct result of personal disputes or involvement with criminal groups and the sex industry. Cases of kidnapping usually involve locals. Nonetheless, you should observe routine precautions, such as avoiding walking or traveling alone after dark.

The threat of terrorism and targeting high value targets (Embassies, Gov't., places where foreign tourists congregate) is highly potential. While acts of terrorism are more likely to take place in the Deep South, Bangkok remains a target for southern insurgents and anti-government political activists.

The Deep South:

Violence in the Deep South, primarily in the provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, has claimed over 5,000 lives in the past nine years, making this the most violent conflict in East Asia. Attack consisted primarily of shootings of soft targets, such as Buddhist monks, teachers, police officers and public servants. However, insurgents have also employed improvised explosive devices and car bombs; shops and hotels have been included in these targets.

Political Perspective:

The General Elections are expected to be held in November 2018. After the tensions between the Pheu Thai Party, led by the 2011-elected Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) led by Suthep Thaugsuban, resulted in protests, sporadic violence, and citywide disruptions in 2013. These events resulted in the overthrowing of Shinawatra's government, a coup d'état on 22 May 2014, and the establishment of a military junta, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), led by General Prayuth Chan-ocha. Under the military government, the 2007 Constitution was partially revoked, martial law was declared and political gatherings have been banned.

Politicians and anti-coup activists have since been arrested, internet censorship has been imposed and the media, while less tightly controlled than in the initial stages, remain under the control of the military. Human rights groups have also alleged instances of torture and disappearances of activists. However, the violence experienced in previous months and political gatherings are no longer evident.

In April 2015, with authorization from the King, General Chan-ocha announced the lifting of martial law. However, martial law has been replaced with the application of section 44, a section from a provisional charter that gives the leader of the kingdom's junta even more power. Although this has not had direct repercussions on foreigners or locals, it is important to keep in mind that as a result, politics in the country are rapidly fluctuating and that it is difficult to predict changes in governmental policies. Visitors should remain vigilant and attentive to political developments during their stay.