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GUIDE

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STUDY DESTINATION

THAILAND

Studying in Thailand as an exchange student is an exciting opportunity! Here's a guide to help you prepare:

1. VISA AND DOCUMENTS

Student Visa (Non-Immigrant ED Visa): You'll need to apply for this at a Thai consulate or embassy before you arrive. Make sure to have the necessary paperwork from your exchange program or university.

Required Documents: Prepare your passport (valid for at least 6 months), acceptance letter from your Thai university, proof of financial stability, and passport-sized photos.

Visa Extensions: After 90 days, you will need to extend your visa at the Thai Immigration Office. You may proceed to Siam University's Visa Department to obtain the necessary documents.

Re-Entry Permits: Make sure to get a re-entry permit beforehand if you plan to visit another country during your semester.



2. HEALTH AND VACCINATIONS

Health Insurance: Ensure you have comprehensive health insurance that covers your stay.

Vaccinations: Check with your doctor about vaccinations. Common recommendations include vaccines for Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid, and Japanese Encephalitis depending on the region.

Medication: If you take regular medication, bring enough to last your stay and a copy of your prescription.

3. CULTURAL PREPARATION

Language: While many Thai people, especially in universities, speak English, learning basic Thai phrases will help you communicate. Phrases like "Sawasdee ka/krub" (hello), "Khob khun ka/krub" (thank you), and "Mai pen rai" (no problem) will come in handy.

Respect for Royalty: Thai people hold their monarchy in high regard. It's important to be respectful and avoid any negative comments about the royal family.

Dress Modestly: Particularly when visiting temples (Wats) or other cultural sites, cover your shoulders and knees. Thai culture values modesty in dress, especially in formal settings.

4. MONEY AND BANKING

Currency: Thailand uses the Baht (THB). ATMs are widely available, and it's easy to exchange foreign currencies in major cities.

Bank Account: For long-term stays, it might be worth opening a Thai bank account. Bangkok Bank or Kasikorn Bank are good options for foreigners.

Budgeting: Thailand is affordable compared to many countries, but you'll still want to budget for things like food, transportation, and weekend trips.

5. TRANSPORTATION

Public Transport: Thailand has a well-developed public transportation system, especially in Bangkok. You can use the BTS Skytrain, MRT subway, buses, and taxis.

Motorbike Taxis: These are a common and fast way to get around in cities, but make sure to wear a helmet and be cautious as traffic can be hectic.

Ride-Hailing Apps: Apps like Grab are widely used for taxis and food delivery.

Bicycle or Motorbike: If you're in a smaller city, renting a bicycle or motorbike might be more convenient for daily travel.

6. CLIMATE AND CLOTHING

Weather: Thailand is tropical, so expect hot and humid weather year-round. However, pack an umbrella for the rainy season (typically from May to October).

Clothing: Lightweight and breathable clothes are best. Pack casual clothes for daily life, but also bring a few formal outfits for university events or temple visits.

7. FOOD AND DINING

Street Food: Thailand is famous for its delicious street food, which is affordable and everywhere. Dishes like pad thai, som tam (papaya salad), and khao pad (fried rice) are must-tries.

Spice Levels: Thai food can be very spicy. If you're not a fan of spicy food, you can ask for "mai phet" (not spicy).

Dining Etiquette: In Thailand, it's polite to leave a small portion of food on your plate when you're done to signal that you're full.

8. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ETIQUETTE

Wai Greeting: The wai (placing your hands together in a prayer-like gesture) is a common form of greeting in Thailand, especially with elders or in formal settings.

Shoes Off: Always remove your shoes before entering someone's home or certain indoor areas like temples and some shops.

Head and Feet: The head is considered the most sacred part of the body, and the feet are seen as the lowest. Avoid touching people's heads and don't point your feet at people or sacred objects.

9. STAYING SAFE

Personal Safety: Thailand is generally safe, but like in any country, it's important to be cautious of pickpockets in crowded areas or tourist hotspots.

Travel Insurance: Make sure your travel insurance covers accidents or emergencies during your stay.

Local Laws: Be mindful of Thai laws, especially regarding drug use (strictly prohibited) and public conduct.

10. CONNECTIVITY

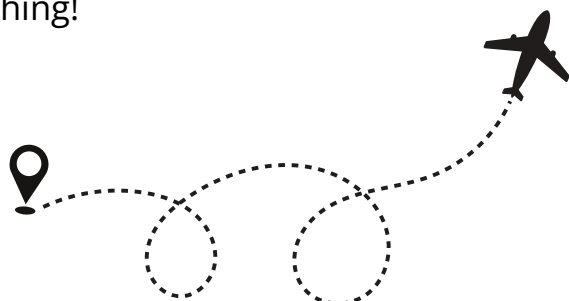
SIM Card: Get a Thai SIM card with data as soon as you arrive. Providers like AIS, DTAC, or TrueMove offer good coverage.

Wi-Fi: Wi-Fi is available in most places like cafes, restaurants, and campuses. If you want constant access, consider a portable Wi-Fi device.

10. WEEKEND AND HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Explore Thailand: You'll have opportunities to travel during weekends or breaks. Destinations like Chiang Mai, Phuket, Ayutthaya, and the islands in the south are popular among exchange students.

By preparing well and embracing local culture, your exchange experience in Thailand will be both exciting and enriching!



YOUR WAY ABROAD

The world has an interesting way of giving great experiences
to the ones who are passionate about their dreams.

Miia Muukkonen, Asia Exchange student

