

ULTIMATE 1-SHEET THAILAND GUIDE 2026

PRINT & TAKE WITH YOU!

1. PRE-FLIGHT PREPARATION

The "Peace of Mind" Checklist Do not leave these until the last minute. Prepare at least 72 hours before you fly.

MANDATORY: TDAC REGISTRATION

Every foreigner (adults, kids, seniors) entering Thailand must have a **Thailand Digital Arrival Card (TDAC)**.

- **Action:** Register online before your flight.
- **Help:** If you are tech-challenged, contact tdac.info agents to assist you.
- **Proof:** Save the QR Code to your phone's "Favorites" album so you can find it offline. Print a paper copy for backup.

Paper Copies (Old School is Best) Phones run out of battery. Internet fails. Print these:

- ✓ **Hotel Confirmation:** Immigration officers often ask to see where you are staying on your first night.
- ✓ **Return Flight Ticket:** Proof that you intend to leave Thailand.
- ✓ **Insurance Policy:** Medical care is excellent but expensive for tourists.
- ✓ **Emergency Address Card:** Ask your hotel to email you their address written in **THAI SCRIPT**. Taxi drivers usually cannot read English addresses.

Digital, Tech & Power Prep

- **Notify Your Bank:** Tell your bank you are traveling to Thailand so they don't block your cards.
- **Download Maps:** Download "Google Maps" for Bangkok/Phuket for *Offline Use*.
- **Apps:** Install **Grab** (for taxis) and **Google Translate** (with Thai language pack) while you have fast WiFi at home.
- **Power Adapter:** Thailand uses a mix of plugs (Type A, B, C). Usually, the "two flat pins" (US style) or "two round pins" (Euro style) work everywhere. Voltage is 220V.
- **Power Banks (Strict):** Must be in **Carry-On** luggage only. Max capacity 32,000 mAh. If the label is worn off, security will throw it away.

2. ARRIVAL AT BKK AIRPORT

The Long Walk Suvarnabhumi Airport is massive. The walk from your gate to Immigration can take **15 to 25 minutes**.

- **Seniors/Disabled:** Do not attempt this walk if you have mobility issues. Request **Wheelchair Assistance** from your airline 48 hours before you fly. They will meet you at the plane door.
- **Toilet Break:** Use the restrooms *before* you get to Immigration. The queues inside can be long (30-60 mins) with no toilets.

Immigration (Passport Control) Go to the zone marked "Foreign Passport".

- **Fingerprints:** You will be asked to scan your fingers (4 fingers right, 4 fingers left, 2 thumbs). Follow the screen instructions.
- **Camera:** Look at the camera. Take off glasses and hat.

PRIORITY LANE ELIGIBILITY

Look for the "Priority" sign. You can skip the long queue if you are:

- Age 70+ (Seniors)
- Pregnant
- Traveling with infants/toddlers
- Disabled / Wheelchair users
- Business Class / First Class

The "No Photo" Rule Do not take selfies or photos of the queue. Immigration officers are strict. Put your phone away.

3. BAGGAGE & CUSTOMS

Baggage Claim

- Check the monitors for your Flight Number.
- **Trolleys:** Free to use. Push the handle down to release the brake.
- **Porters:** Staff in uniforms can help with heavy bags for a small fee.
- **Lost Bags:** If your bag doesn't arrive, look for the "Lost & Found" counter near the exit of the baggage hall.

Customs Checkpoint

- **Green Lane:** "Nothing to Declare." Walk through here if you are a normal tourist.
- **Red Lane:** "Goods to Declare."
- **Bio-Security:** Do not bring fresh fruits, vegetables, or meats without a permit.

STRICT WARNING: LIMITS

Thai Customs is very strict. Fines are instant and high.

- **Alcohol:** Max **1 Liter** per person.
- **Cigarettes:** Max **200 cigarettes** (1 carton) per person.
- **VAPES/E-CIGS: ILLEGAL.** Do not bring them. If found, you will be fined approx 30,000 THB and the device confiscated.

VAT Refund for Tourists If you plan to shop for expensive goods (luxury items, electronics):

- Ask the shop for the ****"Yellow P.P.10 Form"****. You need your passport at the shop.
- At the airport (Departure), show the goods and form at the Customs Office *before* checking in your bags.

4. THE "ILLEGAL" LIST

Avoid trouble by knowing these rules:

1. **Vaping is Illegal** We repeat this because it is important. You see locals doing it, but as a tourist, you are a target for fines. Leave the vape at home.
2. **Cannabis / Weed (2026 Rules)** Cannabis is for medical use. Public smoking is a "Nuisance Crime." Do not smoke in the street, hotels, or public parks.
3. **Drones** You cannot fly a drone unless it is registered with NBTC and CAAT. This process takes weeks. Do not fly without papers; penalties are severe.
4. **Medications** Bring your prescription meds in original bottles. If you have psychotropic drugs (like Xanax), carry a doctor's letter.
5. **Gambling** Gambling is strictly illegal. Do not play cards (even for fun/no money) in public places or on the train.

5. TRANSPORT: GETTING TO THE CITY

Don't get scammed. Follow these exact steps. The airport has different transport on different floors.

OPTION A: PRIVATE TRANSFER (RECOMMENDED)

Best for: Families, Seniors, First-timers.

- **Location:** Meeting Point (Arrivals Hall, Floor 2). Usually near Gate 5 or Gate 10.
- **How:** Book via **TDAC agents** or your hotel before flying.
- **Why:** The driver waits with a sign with your name. They help with luggage. No stress, no scams.
- **Cost:** 1,000 – 1,500 THB.

OPTION B: PUBLIC TAXI (STANDARD)

Best for: Couples, Budget travelers.

1. Go down to **Floor 1** (Ground Level).
2. Walk outside to Gates 4-7. Ignore anyone inside asking "Taxi?"
3. Go to the "Kiosk Machine". Push the button for "Large Taxi" (if you have many bags) or "Regular Taxi".
4. Take the paper slip. **KEEP THIS SLIP.** It has the driver's ID for complaints.
5. Walk to the Lane Number on your slip.
6. **Cost:** Meter Fare + 50 THB Airport Fee + Highway Tolls (Passenger pays cash). Approx 500 THB total. Prepare small notes (100s, 20s). Drivers rarely have change for 1,000.

OPTION C: AIRPORT RAIL LINK (TRAIN)

Best for: Backpackers, Solo travelers.

- **Location:** Floor B (Basement).
- **Cost:** 45 THB.
- **Warning:** The train ends at *Phaya Thai* station. Most stations **DO NOT have elevators** to street level. If you have heavy luggage, you will have to carry it down 3 flights of stairs in the heat. Not recommended for seniors.

6. MONEY & CONNECTIVITY

Currency Exchange

- **Airport:** The bank booths in Arrivals give bad rates.
- **Secret Tip:** Go to **Floor B** (near the Train Station). Look for the **SuperRich** booths (Orange or Green).

They offer the best rates in the country. Exchange your cash there.

- **ATMs:** Safe to use but charge **220 THB fee** per withdrawal. Take out the maximum (20,000 or 30,000 THB) to save on fees. Always choose "Conversion by Your Bank" (Decline the ATM's conversion rate).

Tipping Guide

- **Street Food:** No tip.
- **Restaurants:** 20-40 THB or "keep the change" is polite.
- **Massage:** 50-100 THB to the therapist is standard.
- **Hotel Bellboy:** 20-50 THB per bag.

SIM Cards / Internet

- **At Airport (Floor 2):** AIS, True, DTAC booths.
- **Why:** Staff installs everything. You leave connected.
- **Cost:** 800-1000 THB for 2-4 weeks unlimited.
- **At 7-Eleven (City):**
- **Why:** Cheaper (300 THB).
- **Risk:** Staff might not speak English. You must register it yourself.
- **WiFi:** BKK Airport has free WiFi (select ".AirportTrue-FreeWiFi"). You need to enter your passport number and name to log in.

7. SURVIVAL TIPS FOR "REAL LIFE"

1. The Heat & Water

- **Tap Water:** Do NOT drink it. Brush teeth is okay, but don't swallow. Buy 7-11 bottled water (7-10 THB).
- **Ice:** Ice cylinders/cubes are safe (made in factories). Crushed ice is risky.

• **Pacing:** Don't plan too much. The heat is exhausting.

- 2. **Mosquitoes (Dengue Fever)** Mosquitoes in Thailand can carry Dengue Fever.

• **Action:** Buy "Soffel" pink mosquito spray at any 7-Eleven.

• **When:** Wear it especially at dawn and dusk.

3. The 7-Eleven Culture

- **Food:** The "Ham & Cheese Toastie" is a famous snack. Staff will heat it for you.
- **Credit Cards:** Usually only accepted for purchases over 200 THB. Carry cash for small buys.

• **Alcohol Sale Hours:** You can only buy alcohol 11:00-14:00 and 17:00-Midnight.

- 4. **Crossing the Street** This is the most dangerous part of Thailand.

- **Zebra Crossings:** Cars do NOT stop. Motorbikes strictly do NOT stop.

- **How to cross:** Wait for a gap. Walk steadily. Do not run. Raise your hand to be seen. Ideally, wait for a Thai person to cross and walk next to them (shadow them).

8. ESSENTIAL CULTURE & MANNERS

The "Wai" (Greeting) Press palms together at chest level. Bow head slightly.

- Do this for Hello, Thank you, and Sorry.
- Do not Wai service staff (waiters/drivers) first; a smile is enough.

The Magic Words Add these to the end of sentences for respect:

- Men say: **Krap**
- Women say: **Ka**

Temple Etiquette

- **Clothes:** Shoulders and knees MUST be covered. Carry a sarong/scarf in your bag.
- **Feet:** Shoes OFF before entering the main building. Never point feet at Buddha (sit on your heels).
- **Monks:** Women must NEVER touch a monk or his robes. If giving something, place it on the table or a cloth.

The Head is Sacred The head is considered the highest part of the body.

- Never touch a Thai person's head (even children).
- Do not put your feet up on chairs or point feet at people.

Safety / Scams

- **"Grand Palace Closed":** It's a lie. Walk away.
- **"Suit/Gem Sale":** If a friendly stranger approaches you on the street speaking perfect English, they usually want to sell you a suit. Be polite but keep walking.

9. EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- **Tourist Police:** 1155 (English Spoken)

- **Ambulance:** 1669

- **TDAC Help:** Visit tdac.info

Welcome to Thailand!

Need a Private Driver or Fast Track? Contact tdac.info