

# Grand Tour of Thailand: Bangkok, Chiang Mai & Phuket

Pre-departure information for your tour



## Passport, Visa & Entry Requirements

- In order to enter Thailand (and Cambodia on the tour extension), U.S. and Canadian citizens need a valid passport with an expiration date extending at least six months beyond the date of reentry.
- We recommend having at least two blank passport pages for entry stamps.
- There is no visa required for U.S. or Canadian citizens traveling to Thailand.
- U.S. and Canadian passport holders must obtain a visa to enter Cambodia on the tour extension. You may choose to obtain your Cambodia visa at the port of entry (you will need \$30USD and two passport-sized photos), by purchasing an electronic visa on the [Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), by applying directly to the Cambodian consulate, or by using a visa provider, such as our partner company, [VisaCentral](#).
- If you are not a U.S. or Canadian citizen, you must contact each country's consulate for your specific entry requirements.
- You can see the most up-to-date entry requirements for the destination(s) you'll visit on tour by going to [goaheadtours.com/entry-requirements](#) and searching the code TAT.

## Arrival & Departure Information

- Round-trip flights booked through Go Ahead Tours arrive in and depart from Bangkok.
- Transfers to and from the airport at your destination are included for travelers who have purchased their flights through Go Ahead Tours. Travelers who purchase their own flights may request airport transfers with Go Ahead Tours for an additional cost if they are arriving or departing on the standard day.
- When you arrive in Bangkok, a Go Ahead representative will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall with a Go Ahead sign or a sign with your name(s). If you don't see a representative immediately, please be patient and stay in the arrivals area. They may be assisting another traveler who has also just arrived and will be back shortly.

## Transportation on Tour

- This tour includes various modes of transportation including private motor coach, plane, long-boat, covered pick-up truck, cable car, speed boat, and canoe. Some modes of transportation will have raised platforms or steps and often not provide access to ramps or lifts. Boats may also require travelers to stoop to get in and out of their seats.
- Small boat rides and a flight from Bangkok to Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai to Phuket and Phuket to Bangkok are included in the price of your tour (the tour extension also includes one round-trip flight between Bangkok and Siem Reap).
- All other included transportation on this tour is by private motor coach.
- To get in and out of the canal boats in Bangkok, travelers should be prepared to crouch down and slide through tight quarters.

## Baggage Allowance & Expectations

- Please note that our travelers are limited to one checked bag per person due to storage limitations on motor coaches and included flights.
- Some airlines may impose additional charges if you choose to exceed baggage size and weight restrictions. Be advised that you are responsible for any baggage fees incurred on all flights.
- Contact your airline(s) for baggage size and weight restrictions for your flights. Please note that your included on-tour flights may have more restrictive baggage limits.
- Make sure you label your baggage and keep valuables, medication, and documents in your carry-on bag.
- Travelers must manage their own luggage throughout tour as porters are not guaranteed. This includes at hotel and airports.

## Clothing & Packing Tips

- We recommend packing lightweight, loose-fitting clothing that can be easily layered to accommodate varying temperatures, as well

as a light jacket or rainwear.

- A sturdy pair of walking shoes or sneakers is recommended for sightseeing. Please note that you will be required to remove your shoes at all Buddhist religious sites.
- You may want to pack dressier attire if you plan to visit a high-end restaurant or attend a special performance.
- It is preferable not to visit temples or other religious sites with bare legs and shoulders (and entrance may be denied on this basis).
- Waterproof shoes or sandals, a swimsuit, sunscreen, and insect repellent are recommended for outdoor activities.
- Binoculars are handy for a closer look at local wildlife and scenery.
- We recommend packing a universal adapter, as well as a voltage converter if you plan on using your own hairdryer or other device without a built-in converter.
- We recommend packing your Insurance Card (from your primary insurance provider) in your carry on luggage.

## Meals & Cuisine

- This tour includes 4 lunches and 4 dinners. Included meals may be plated set menus, buffet or family style depending on the location. Dinners include one glass of beer, wine, or soft drink and water, coffee and tea.
- Breakfast each morning is also included at the hotel and is typically buffet style with hot and cold options.
- The lunch at the elephant sanctuary is typically a vegetarian buffet, including water, coffee, and tea.
- At the Thai Cooking Class & Dinner, some dishes may include sour and spicy prawn soup, Thai green curry with chicken, mango sweet sticky rice and stir fried chicken with cashew (seasonal and subject to change).
- Traditional Thai cooking uses market-fresh ingredients seasoned with a mix of herbs, spices, and condiments such as chili peppers and fish sauce. The main staple is rice. Most meals include a soup, a curry, a steamed or fried dish, and a salad.
- On the tour extension, international influence is evident in the Khmer cuisine of Cambodia, where full flavor is created through the mix of herbs and spices such as sweet basil,

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Asian coriander, mint, lemongrass, and pepper. The base of almost all Cambodian dishes is rice or noodles, served with a curry, soup, or vegetable stir-fry. Grilled freshwater fish is popular, and the fermented fish paste known as prahok is a traditional seasoning.

## Tipping

- At the conclusion of your tour, it is customary to offer your Tour Director and driver a gratuity in local currency. Please keep current exchange rates in mind.
- We recommend tipping the equivalent of \$10USD to \$12USD per person per day for your Tour Director and the equivalent of \$3USD per person per day for your driver.
- If applicable, we also recommend the equivalent of \$2USD per local guide.
- Tips can only be paid in cash.
- The cost of portage is included in your tour price, and it is not necessary to tip baggage handlers.

## Currency

- You will use the Thai baht in Thailand (plus the Cambodian riel on the tour extension).
- On the tour extension in Cambodia, U.S. dollars are accepted everywhere, though change may be given in riel. Most hotels, restaurants, shops, taxis, buses, and airlines list their prices in U.S. dollars, but small transactions (less than a dollar) are usually conducted in riel. Always carry small amounts of riel for motorcycle taxis, snacks, and other small purchases.
- Better rates of exchange are usually available overseas, although it's worth ordering some currency from your local bank to use when you first arrive.
- We strongly advise that you take debit/bank cards and credit cards, which can be used to withdraw cash at local banks as needed.
- You can use most debit/credit cards at ATMs on the international networks Cirrus and Plus, but make sure to check with your home bank about withdrawal fees.
- Inform your bank and credit card company of your travel plans so that they won't confuse your international purchases for fraudulent charges.
- International banks and businesses primarily

accept debit and credit cards that work with the EMV chip system. If you do not already have at least one debit or credit card with a chip in it, we strongly recommend requesting one from your bank prior to your tour.

- Plan ahead and bring cash to tip your tour director, local guides, and bus drivers.

## Responsible Travel

- When you travel with EF Go Ahead Tours, you'll make a positive impact on the places you visit, and the people and animals you meet along the way. That's because our three core Responsible Travel commitments—protecting the environment, supporting local communities, and promoting animal welfare—are at the heart of every tour we offer.
- Travel, when done responsibly, can make an enormous socio-economic impact to communities. To maximize your impact, eat at locally owned restaurants and shop at local businesses. Ask your Tour Director to point out restaurants they recommend.
- Prepare for your trip: be aware of the monetary norms such as tipping and negotiating in a market, learn about the destination's forms of etiquette, and take some time to learn a few words in the local language.
- When interacting with locals, make sure to ask people for permission before you take their picture, and approach cultural differences with empathy and an open mind.
- EF Go Ahead Tours encourages our travelers to limit their waste while on the road, especially single use plastics. You can avoid single use plastics by packing your own toiletries, using electronic documents, and bringing a reusable water bottle and shopping bag. If you need to use plastics or paper, please recycle.
- Environment: When visiting national parks, reserves, or other protected areas, please do not remove anything from the natural environment or leave any litter. Carry out what you carried in.
- Animal Welfare: Take the philosophies of World Animal Protection to heart during included tour activities and your free time.

Do not touch, do not feed, and maintain a respectful distance from wild animals. Wild animals encountered on tour should be able to exhibit natural forms of behavior. If you feel we are not meeting these commitments, please share your feedback with us.

- Animal Welfare: Avoid buying any exploitative wildlife products such as tortoise shell or shark fin soup.