

FAQ's for Thailand

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1. What is Thailand like?

Thailand is a tropical country in southeast Asia, with Bangkok in the center and located about 600 miles north of the equator on about the same latitude as Costa Rica. There are jungles, beautiful beaches, and in the last 20 years, some of the best golf in the world.

The 65 million Thais are predominantly Buddhist and the history of the culture and architecture goes back several thousand years. Thai is the dominant language but enough English is spoken and written to make your stay pleasurable yet interesting. The people are a true joy, and with a focus on tourism, their country's top industry, the service levels tend to spoil the western traveler.

2. What will the climate be in Thailand?

Located in the tropics, the temperatures are warm and humid year around. Up north in Chiang Mai, there are some cool mornings in the winter but it is still a great place for warm weather golf.

There are three seasons in Thailand.....

- *Winter (Nov – Mar) with little rain, highs in the upper 80's and lows in the upper 60's*
- *Hot (Apr – Jul) with little rain, highs in the upper 90's and lows in the upper 70's*
- *Monsoon (Aug – Oct) with almost daily rain but mostly at night and highs in the lower 90's and lows in the low 70's*

Typically, we lose less than 10 golf days in a year to unplayable rain

3. How long is the trip over there?

This is one of the few downsides to Thailand....Denver to Bangkok is almost 10,000 miles and with a layover on the west coast and again in either Tokyo, Taipei or Incheon, the trip can take up to 24 hours. And since we cross the International Date Line going over, we lose a day which we gain back on the return flight. The good news is that

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there is excellent service from major domestic and foreign carriers like United, Delta, Asiana, Thai and Singapore Air.

4. What is the golf like in Thailand?

Thailand has seen a boom in golf over the last 20 years. Top course designers like Jack Nicklaus, Peter Dye, Nick Faldo and Peter Thompson have created real golf masterpieces there with championship courses, challenging water and bunkers, and dramatic and luxurious clubhouses.

The courses are perfectly groomed with carpeted fairways and excellent greens. Most courses have water in play on more than 50% of the holes.

Golf in Thailand is played with mandatory female caddies (included in the tour package along with the tip) and they add so much to your round with their local knowledge, yardage information and ability to read the greens. By the second hole, they will have you clubbed perfectly for every shot.

With the caddies to manage the clubs and balls, most people walk. However, optional carts are available and on two of the courses, they are mandatory and included in the tour package.

5. What about clubs? Do they rent them there or should I take my own?

Most courses have knock-off and genuine brand clubs for rent. The cost ranges from \$10-25 per round and with all the transfers managed by your tour guides and hassle free, most people bring their own clubs. Golf balls are very expensive in Thailand so it's a good idea to bring a dozen on the trip. Most courses require soft spikes and shoes can be rented there too.

6. What activities are there for non-golfers?

The hotels we stay at have some of the best spas in the world and spa trips can be substituted for golf. In Chiang Mai, there is a Thai cooking class as well as a day trip to visit one of the nearby hill tribes and waterfalls.

There are site-seeing trips included for all participants too. In Bangkok, we have allocated an escorted day of visiting some of the most magnificent temples and Buddha statues in the world along with a long-tail boat ride through the back canals of Bangkok and some shopping.

In Chiang Mai, we have a really special treat for all golfers and non-golfers alike.....a 1 ½ hour ride on the back of an elephant, through the jungle, crossing rivers and through some hill tribe villages. For many, this is the highlight of their entire vacation.

Also included (along with the tip) for all golfers and non-golfers alike, are two 2-hour Thai massages.

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Make no mistake, this is a vacation for golfers who love a challenging game, on beautiful courses, in a paradise-like setting. But Thailand has enough to interest everybody with amazing experiences and a lifetime of memories.

7. Can you add additional rounds of golf?

Absolutely, on many of the golf days, we tee off between 8 and 9 and provide you with lunch at the golf course clubhouse. Most afternoons, there is free time for the pool, site-seeing, napping, or shopping. We can arrange for additional golf at other courses in those afternoon slots for those who just can't get enough great golf. In Pattaya alone, there are over 25 courses within a 30 mile radius of our hotel on the beach. We can also extend your stay to take in even more of the beautiful courses there.

8. What are the health and safety considerations there?

Doctors, dentists and hospitals are first rate in Thailand and most are western trained. Medical tourism is a huge part of their economy and in the unlikely event you need medical attention, it is quick, convenient, up to western standards and you will be talking to a doctor and nurse who speak English. Health insurance from the States is generally not accepted in Thailand but the costs are very low so the fees can be paid via credit card and submitted for reimbursement in the US.

Safety is of no more concern than it would be in any other part of the world. There is crime but it is less than most other tourist destinations and since the tour is fully escorted by Randy and Chaw, you'll always have that "local knowledge".

9. What is the money situation over there? Are credit cards accepted?

Thai currency is the Baht and there is currently about 33 Baht to the US Dollar (100 Baht is approximately \$3.00US). Local currency is very easy to obtain economically through the multitude of ATM's throughout the country. They are safe, secure and only charge a 150 Baht (\$4.50) fee for a withdrawal from a foreign bank. You can use your same 4 digit code for your ATM withdrawals that you use in the US and the transaction is safe and secure. There are also many currency exchange booths where you can exchange US Dollars in either \$100 bills or traveler's checks into Thai Baht. US Dollars can be given as a tip but won't be accepted by most merchants.

At all hotels and golf courses, credit cards are accepted at all hotels and golf courses, though these will be covered as part of your tour package. Small to medium sized restaurants will usually only take Baht. Jewelers and tailors (see #12 below) will generally take credit cards but for the best deals and for small purchases of souvenirs and incidentals, Baht works best. MasterCard and Visa are the most universally accepted credit cards. American Express is a close second with Discover and Carte Blanche rarely accepted.

10. Can you drink the water?

The municipal water in most of Thailand is safe to drink. However, with bottled water both plentiful and inexpensive (25¢ for a 500ml bottle), most people drink the bottled stuff, but brushing your teeth, swimming in the pool, ice cubes in drinks, etc is absolutely no problem.

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We also have a cooler in our vans so you always have complimentary cold water available during transfers to/from hotels, golf courses, site-seeing, etc.

Beer and soft drinks are plentiful and inexpensive too. Liquor and wines are available in most places but they tend to be a bit pricier.

11. What about the food? I hear it's really spicy. What about special diets? Is there American food available?

If you've tried and liked Thai food in America, you will absolutely LOVE the food over there. Everything is fresh, the spices and seasonings are authentic, and the flavor of Thai food has become one of the most popular cuisines in the world.

We provide most all the meals and will be with you to help you decide and order those things that best appeal to you and with a spiciness that is to your liking. The Thais DO eat very spicy food but tend to really tone it down for westerners. Want no chance on a burning tongue, just order your food SOON PET (no chili) and it will be fine.

The Thais eat a lot of chicken (gai), fish (plaa), pork (moo), vegetables (paak), rice (khow), and noodles (sen lek). The main seasonings include chili peppers, lemongrass, ginger, curry, garlic, Thai basil, onions and lime. Peanuts are used frequently and if you have peanut allergies, be sure to let your guides know.

For those who are not culinarily adventuresome, there are multitudes of American options. Breakfast will always have a bacon and egg option, and hamburgers, fish and chips, and sandwiches are available for later in the day. There are even an abundance of McDonalds, KFC's and Subways for those who need a piece of home.

12. What items are very good shopping buys in Thailand?

Jewelry is a Thai specialty with the ability to pick stones and settings for rings, earrings, necklaces, pins and bracelets. Thailand is famous for top quality and inexpensive emeralds, sapphires, rubies, jade and many other semi-precious stones.

There are many high-quality custom tailors that will hand make clothes for both men and women. Men's custom-made suits in cashmere/wool with full silk lining, dress shirts and ties are excellent values and women find that silk gowns and scarves and tailored wool and cotton outfits are a real buy. The fabrics are all the very best material and the clothes are expertly fit to your exact measurements and preferences. The savings over sale prices on off the rack clothes in the States can more than pay for the trip.

Here is where Randy and Chaw really shine, guiding you through the language, the local customs, and negotiations of the stores and making sure that you get exactly what you want, and at a price you are willing to pay. They are not on commission and will help you negotiate and assure your satisfaction from merchants who know us and appreciate and value our continued support.

For inexpensive souvenirs, there are many street stands as well as our organized evening at the Chiang Mai Night Market where inexpensive bargains abound on everything from Buddha statues to silk scarves to t-shirts to ties.

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13. What documentation, visas, vaccinations, etc do you need to go to Thailand?

Thailand requires that you have a valid US passport that does not expire within 6 months of your entry. As long as you are staying less than 30 consecutive days, you do not need a visa and will get an entry stamp upon your arrival.

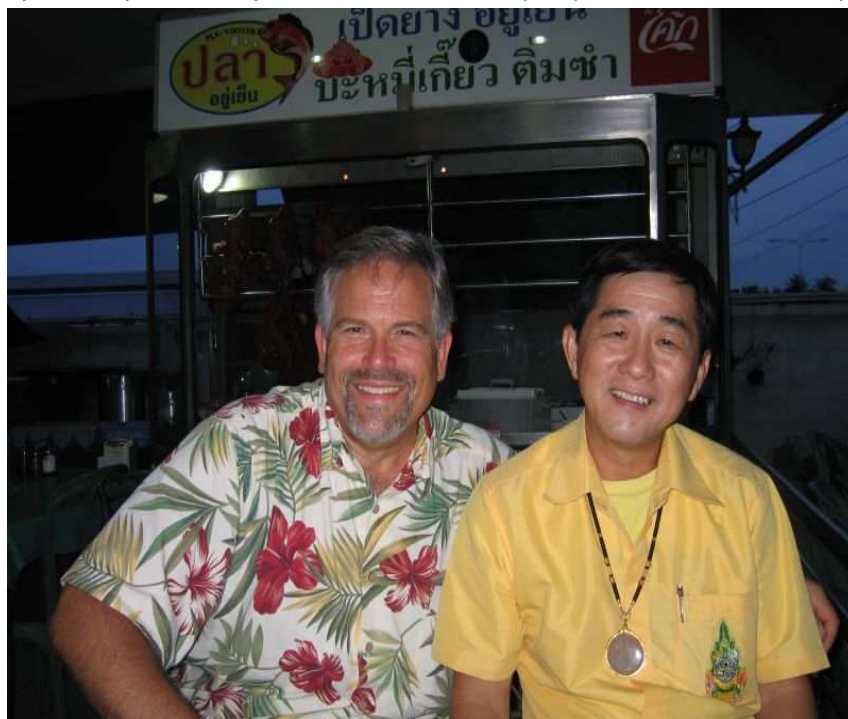
Generally, those in reasonable health don't need any special shots or medicines. Those with a weakened immune system may want to get malaria medication from their doctor before going. It is an inexpensive, once-a-week pill taken 2 weeks before, during and 4 weeks after the trip, and has no bad side effects.

One of the fun things to do in Pattaya is renting one of the many motor scooters available. They are fun, inexpensive (\$6/day including a helmet) and are a great way to explore a bit on your own. If you want to do this, getting an international drivers license from your AAA office is a good idea.

14. You keep saying "fully escorted". What type of support will we have over there?

Your American and Thai guides will be with you for every step of the way, for every hotel check-in/check-out, tee-off, transfer, and provided meal. We'll meet you at the airport upon arrival and guide you through check-in on the day of your departure. We will provide you with a Thai mobile phone with programmed keys to Randy, Chaw, and each of your hotels so even during the times you want to explore on your own, English speaking help is never more than a quick call away.

Randy has been visiting and working in Thailand for 15 years and Chaw has been leading tours in his home country of Thailand for over 20 years so you'll always have the "insider's" perspective. Sawadee Kahp!



For more information, please contact
Randy Hurwitz (303) 888-3432 rwhurwitz@msn.com