

Resource 31: Thailand Culture & Logistical Survival Guide

1. Essential Entry & Visa Rules

- **Visa Exemption:** Many travelers, including U.S. citizens, can enter Thailand for tourism purposes without a visa for short stays. Check current entry regulations based on your specific travel duration.
- **Passport Validity:** Passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining beyond the date of entry.

2. Universal Emergency Numbers

- **Tourist Police:** 1155 (provides assistance in multiple languages).
- **Ambulance/Emergency:** 1669.
- **Police:** 191.

3. Transit Rules & Etiquette

- **Ride-Hailing:** Apps like **Grab** and **Bolt** are widely used and offer fixed pricing, making them preferable to unmetered taxis.
- **Tuk-Tuks:** While iconic, always negotiate and agree on a fare *before* getting into a tuk-tuk.
- **Public Transport:** In Bangkok, the **BTS Skytrain** and **MRT subway** are efficient ways to bypass heavy street traffic.

4. Money, Currency & Tipping

- **Currency:** Thai Baht (THB).
- **Cash Culture:** Cash is essential for street food, local markets, and smaller businesses. Carry small denominations.
- **Tipping:** Tipping is not mandatory in Thailand, though leaving spare change or rounding up your bill at restaurants is appreciated. In high-end establishments, a service charge is often already included.

5. Client Cultural Briefing: Etiquette & Social Norms

Cultural Dimension	Client Behavioral Expectation	Why It Matters

The Head and Feet	Never touch a Thai person's head (the most sacred part) or point your feet at anyone or anything, especially Buddha images.	The head is considered the highest part of the body, and the feet the lowest and "dirtiest."
The "Wai" Greeting	A polite "Wai" (pressing palms together at chest level with a slight bow) is the traditional greeting.	It is a fundamental gesture of respect, especially when greeting elders or those in higher-status positions.
Monarchy & Religion	Show the utmost respect for the Royal Family and Buddha images. Avoid any derogatory comments or actions.	Lèse-majesté laws are strictly enforced, and religion is central to Thai life.
Modesty at Temples	Always cover shoulders and knees when visiting temples. Slip-on shoes are recommended for easy removal.	Temples are deeply sacred spaces; dressing modestly is a requirement for entry.



6. Tech & Connectivity Realities

- **Outlets:** Thailand uses a variety of plug types (A, B, C, F). A universal travel adapter is highly recommended. Voltage is 220V.
- **Connectivity:** Thailand has excellent mobile data coverage. Purchasing a local travel SIM card at the airport is easy and affordable.



7. Daily Pacing & Practicalities

- **Water Safety:** Never drink tap water. Use bottled or purified water only.
- **Pacing:** Thailand can be hot and humid. Encourage clients to plan outdoor activities for early morning or late afternoon.



8. Active U.S. Diplomatic Contacts

- **U.S. Embassy Bangkok:** 95 Wireless Road, Bangkok.
- **U.S. Consulate General Chiang Mai:** 387 Witchayanon Road, Chiang Mai.



9. Client "Quick-Check" Summary

- **Key Takeaway:** Thailand is known as the "Land of Smiles." Approach every interaction with a calm, friendly, and respectful demeanor, and your clients will be warmly received.