



Australia Toll Free: 1-800-606-284
New Zealand Toll Free: 0800-7-88-66-33
Skype: stunning.makeovers
www.stunningmakeovers.com

Please contact us +64 21 983 225 if we can assist you in any way during your stay

INFORMATION PACK

This pack contains important information that you should read prior to travelling.

Medications/Medical Conditions

Some types of medication or supplements can have a blood thinning effect which can result in elevated levels of bleeding.

If you are taking any medications or supplements or have any medical conditions that may affect your treatment, please advise us straight away. You should also discuss any concerns with your G.P.

Consultation

It is important that you have all of the information you need to make an informed decision about your proposed treatment plan. Please talk to the specialist about the best options and materials for your case.

The specialist will be happy to explain everything in detail and answer any questions you have. Please review the cost of treatment prior agreeing to have treatment.

Questions To Ask the Specialist During Consultation

(Some common questions listed below, please add your own and take this form to your consultation)

What are the risks of this treatment?

What materials are used/recommended?

How long will it take for the swelling and bruising to get better?

Will my treatment be completed before flying home?

Will I have to return for more treatment?

What is the estimated cost of treatment?

Dental Pricing

The pricing estimate provided to you by the specialist was based on standard, non-complicated cases, using the information that you have provided. Estimated prices provided can change. The actual cost can only be determined after consultation with the specialist. The costs may vary due to a change in the treatment plan recommended after consultation or different quality materials to be used.

The final amount that you pay in your currency is subject to the exchange rate of the day. Any difference in exchange rate will either result in you paying more or less than the amount quoted by Stunning Makeovers at the time of providing you an estimate.

Payment Methods

The practice will accept your payment for treatment in cash or credit card. Payment by Debit Card, Travel Card or Cash Passport may not be possible if your dental costs are in excess of THB20,000. This is the daily limit imposed by the banking system in Thailand.

DEBIT CARDS and TRAVEL CARDS – Thai banking regulations restrict daily transaction amounts on debit cards and travel cards. This can cause problems if paying large amounts for dental treatment. Instead payment can be made using cash or internationally recognised credit cards. If paying by credit card, please inform your bank ahead of time that you will be charging a amount overseas.

If paying by cash, notes must be new, crisp, and free of wrinkles, tears, smudges, and ink-marks otherwise the bank may not accept them. We recommend that you take at least a small sum of Thai currency with you so that you can pay for incidentals when you arrive such as bottled water, transfer fees and other items you cannot pay for by credit.

Credit Cards

All major credit cards are accepted in Thailand. However, American Express and Diners Club are not widely accepted.

Due to concerns about credit card fraud, your bank may put a hold on your card when they see transactions are being made in Thailand as this is out of the ordinary. Please contact your bank and advise them that you are going to be using your credit card in Thailand prior to your departure.

Additional Treatments

There are many treatments that we can arrange for you for a full makeover. These include:

Botox and fillers	Lasik Vision Correction
Thermage	Breast Augmentation
IPL (Intense Pulse Light treatment)	Liposuction

For a full list of surgical and non-surgical procedures please talk to us before departure.

Risks

Any dental treatment carries risk. You must be prepared to accept the risks that treatment presents before agreeing to have treatment. The decision to proceed with treatment lies totally with you.

If you have realistic expectations we are sure that you will be pleased with the result of your treatment.

You are under no obligation to undertake treatment even after the consultation with the specialist. We respect your right to cancel your treatment. You will not incur any cancellation penalty if you cancel. You will only have to pay the consultation fee and pay for any x-rays that may have been taken.

Stunning Makeovers Ltd as the organiser of cosmetic surgery & dental holidays cannot be held responsible for any surgical outcome.

Feedback

Your feedback is very important to us. We not only listen to you, we act on any comments you have that will improve our service or our partner's service,

Stunning Makeovers, the practice and the specialists are all available to you when you return home. We will keep in touch with you and check on your progress. If you have any questions or concerns when you are home, we can ask the specialist for .

What a journey! What a great experience! What a Stunning new you!

You may not look or feel like it in the first few weeks when you return home if swelling is present but you know the stunning, sexy, more confident and youthful you is about to make an appearance..... and won't some peoples jaw drop!

Become A Stunning Makeovers Ambassador

You are looking a million dollars with a Hollywood Smile and friends have commented on how great you look these days. And you are probably still receiving compliments from friends or family members who haven't seen you a while.

Your own Stunning Makeovers experience has made a positive effect on your self confidence. You know how easy and affordable it was to have your treatment through Stunning Makeovers, so now its your chance to empower others to do the same.....and be ***rewarded***.

If you are comfortable talking to others about your own experience, then we welcome you to join us as a Stunning Makeovers Ambassador. You can make a difference and help others to make their ***dreams come true!***

To embark on this rewarding journey, you must have had treatment through Stunning Makeovers Ltd and be so excited about your experience and results that you want to share it with others.

How Does The Ambassador Program Work?

You meet and talk with friends, family, colleagues or anyone you know that is interested in having cosmetic surgery.

You talk openly and honestly about your own experience including how Stunning Makeovers put it all together for you as well as your experience with your specialist and the dental team.

Invite them to make an online enquiry www.stunningmakeovers.com and then email paul@stunningmakeovers.com with the details on who you have met. You must let us know that you are referring someone prior to them contacting us.

The Stunning Makeovers team will follow up your leads and provide them an estimate.

When they book their procedure, we will inform you. The referral reward for qualifying dental treatment is \$50 or \$100 for a qualifying surgery.

The terms and conditions and reward system is subject to change. Please contact us for more information on referring a friend or family member.

There is NO cost to join the Ambassador Program and you will receive support from Stunning Makeovers Ltd. Your commitment to the Ambassador Program is entirely up to you. You choose the hours you want to work to suit your lifestyle. How you meet with people is also entirely up to you. There is no territory allocation.

You may choose to have a dinner party, cocktail evening or an informal morning or afternoon coffee group. You may even prefer a one-on-one meeting. A setting where people can ask questions comfortably and see the results is ideal.

The medical tourism industry is booming so it is easy to see that in a short time, you could have a very lucrative secondary income working flexible hours to suit your family and lifestyle.

Future Bookings

As a valued client, we do not charge a booking fee for any future bookings you wish to make at the same hospital or dental practice. So you can enjoy our services absolutely free of charge if you wish to have other treatments in the future.

BEFORE YOU FLY OUT

Please programme the relevant phone numbers into your telephone before you depart.

Stunning Makeovers Ltd Office: +64-9-533-5390

Paul McGowan Mobile: +64-21-983-225

Swee McGowan Mobile: +64-21-953-093

Please refer to your itinerary for other important numbers when in Thailand.

Passport Validity

Usually your passport must be valid for at least six months from arrival in Thailand. This can change from time to time so please check with your travel agent to ascertain the current requirements.

Vaccinations

Please check with your family doctor on whether vaccinations are recommended for you before you depart.

Travel Insurance

We recommend you take out travel insurance before travelling.

Passport and Visa to enter Thailand

There are approximately 40 nations that qualify for a Thai visa waiver or Thai visa exemption. With evidence of onward/return travel, citizens of New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the USA, and most European nations may enter Thailand for up to 30 days without a Thai visa. These Thailand visa waivers are issued upon arrival in Thailand. Those entering Thailand by land may not receive a 30 day exemption however; the Thai visa waiver was reduced to 15 days for those entering by land after January 1, 2009.

Information on locations and contact numbers of Thailand Embassies and Consulate-Generals abroad may be obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Consular Affairs, Visas and Travel Documents Division, 123 Chaengwattana Road, Bangkok 10210, Tel. (662) 981-7171 ext. 3201-2, 3204-5 or direct line 575-1062-4, Fax. (662) 575-1066, e-mail: div1303@mfa.go.th

Immigration policies are subject to change: check with a Thai Embassy or The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.mfa.go.th) for the latest information.

Bringing your personal (doctor) prescribed medication

Customs allow visitors to bring what they need to cover their medical needs while in the country. So long as your drugs are not on the short list of "banned" items (think "illegal" narcotics and the like) and they are for your own personal use (not for re-sale or gifting) while the country, you can bring into Thailand what you need for the authorised period of your stay.

Best advice is to carry the medications in its original packaging and have a brief note from your medical provider and/or a copy of the prescription/script which outlines the drug(s) in your possession and your dosage schedule.

It's fair to note that customs inspections in Thailand are, for the most part, a very quick process and the vast majority of incoming passengers are passed onward without any formal contact. However, having proper documentation to justify your possession of these drugs will only serve to expedite your clearance should you be selected for further examination.

Duty Free Declarations and Allowances

Thailand customs allows visitors to enter Thailand with personal effects, the value of which does not exceed 80,000 Baht, without paying import fees as long as: 1) the items are specifically for personal or professional use; 2) the amount of goods are reasonable; and 3) the items are not subject to restriction or prohibition. There are restrictions on the amounts of alcohol and tobacco products; only the following amounts may be transported into Thailand under duty free regulations:

- * 250 grams of cigars or smoking tobacco, or 200 cigarettes
- * 1 litre of wine or liquor

Customs allowances and restrictions are subject to change. Please check with your local travel agent about the current allowances before departure

Prohibited and Restricted Goods

The Thailand Customs Department is responsible for stemming the illegal transport of illicit drugs into and out of Thailand. Consequently, Thailand Customs officials do occasionally ask to search passengers' bags. If you have nothing to declare, simply walk through the Green Channel, stopping only if asked to do so by a customs agent.

If you have goods to declare, you should hand a customs form to the Thailand Customs Department agent at the Red Channel marked "goods to declare".

Departure Tax

International departure taxes are now included in the cost of most air tickets when they are issued by an airline or travel agent. There are no official domestic departure taxes, although privately owned and operated airports, such as Koh Samui Airport, has levied a small domestic "departure tax" in the past and may still do so depending on their current policies.

Thailand Time

Thailand Standard Time is +7 GMT. Thailand does not observe daylight savings.'

Weather

Cool Season (November - February)

The weather in Thailand around the central, northern, and northeastern regions is mostly cool and dry between November and February and consequently the busiest time to visit Thailand.

Hot Season (March - June)

The weather in Thailand classified as the hot season lasts from March to June when higher relative temperatures and occasional rain are the norm.

Rainy Season (July - October)

The rainy season lasts from July to October and is dominated by the southwest monsoon, during which time rainfall in most of Thailand is at its heaviest. However, like the "cool" season, the name "rainy season" is slightly misleading. While it certainly does rain during this season it's more likely to consist of flash-flood afternoon downpours than a continual drizzle for days. If you can bear the heat and humidity, the weather in Thailand is typically sunny throughout the rainy season, but when the rain comes, it's fast and it's furious.

Clothing

Selecting appropriate clothing for visiting Thailand depends on the season and your itinerary, including your intended activities. However, while shorts, sleeveless t-shirts, and sandals would seem most practical,

Thailand has somewhat conservative dressing standards and Thais tend to look disapprovingly on those too casually dressed, particularly for those intending to visit temples or establishments catering to well-to-do Thai clientele, both of which are unlikely to allow you entry if you are dressed in such a manner.

That said, streets do flood during the rainy season, and temples and even some Thai businesses expect you to remove your shoes before entering. So sandals are quite practical. Loose fitting, lightweight clothing that breathes well and dries quickly is your best bet for "rainy" season garb, and a poncho and/or travel umbrella is also highly recommended gear.

A hat to protect you from the sun is a good bet year round; one that protects against sun and rain is an even better idea.

Cash

We recommend that you take at least a small sum of Thai currency with you so that you can pay for incidentals when you arrive such as bottled water, transfer fees and other items you cannot pay for by credit card.

WHILE YOU ARE THERE

Phuket is located approximately 862 kilometres south of Bangkok. There are only two seasons in a year the green season (May to October) and the hot season (November to April).

Deevana Patong Resort Hotel

Your hotel is ideally located on Patong Beach with spectacular views of the surrounding, natural, lush tropical gardens. It is 200 meters to Thawee Wong Road, better known as Patong Beach Street. Within walking distance to shops, Jungceylon Shopping Centre, restaurants, night market and entertainment districts of Patong.

It is centrally located to major tourist attractions such as the Phuket Fantasea Show, Simon cabaret show, Thai Boxing, Patong and night Life and Phuket Town.

Internet and Phone Calls

Complimentary Wi-Fi internet access is available in room. If you don't want to incur the expense of phone calls on your smart phone, just switch the mobile connection off and use the wifi setting. You can call family using one of the many free or low cost options such as Skype, Viber or Whatsapp.

Tipping

Tipping is not a usual practice in Thailand although it is becoming more common. Most hotels and restaurants add a 10% service charge to the bill. Taxi drivers do not require a tip, but the gesture is appreciated and 10-20 baht is acceptable for porters.

Bargaining

Fixed prices are the norm in department stores, but at most other places bargaining is to be expected. Generally, you can obtain a final figure of between 10-40% lower than the original asking price.

Much depends on your skills and the shopkeeper's mood. But remember, Thais appreciate good manners and a sense of humor. With patience and a broad smile, you will not only get a better price, you will also enjoy shopping as an art.

Electricity

The electric current in Thailand is 220 Volt AC (50 cycles) throughout the country. The sockets are different to New Zealand and Australia so you will need an international adaptor or two if you have multiple devices to charge.

Some hotel rooms have an international wall socket that accepts different kinds of plugs and an adaptor is not required.



Water

Though tap water in Bangkok is technically safe to drink, the plumbing in certain buildings may make water inadvisable to ingest. Furthermore, travelers' unaccustomed to otherwise harmless bacteria in the water could get upset stomachs from consuming ice that is technically 'safe' to consume. Bottled water in Thailand is recommended as it is cheap and safe.

Health & Safety

Some people may worry about their health in Thailand or about Thailand safety, but Thailand is a very safe country, generally free of crime and most dangerous diseases. Regardless, travellers should take standard precautions. Avoid walking alone at night in remote areas and keep tabs on your valuables (such as your wallet or camera) when in crowded public areas. Some diseases that travellers may be exposed to, such as dengue fever, are mosquito borne and should be protected against with quality mosquito repellent. Minor stomach illnesses can be avoided by drinking bottled water and by eating made-to-order foods. There are police stations and tourist police booths located in and around all major tourist areas and police are typically very helpful to foreigners.

For 24 hour emergency assistance dial: 191

For tourist police: 1155

Business Hours

Generally speaking, Bangkok and the major tourist destinations such as Pattaya, Chiang Mai, and Phuket generally have longer opening hours for most services; however, operating hours for most businesses and government services in Thailand are not dissimilar to those in most other developed nations.

Shops and Department Stores

Most shops are open seven days a week from 10 am to 10 pm. Local "mom and pop" convenience stores may open earlier and remain open until after midnight. Thai markets are open various hours depending on the wares they sell, with wet-markets selling food products from the wee hours of the morning until around 10am, while night markets typically open around sunset and remain open until 10pm or occasionally midnight.

Banking Hours

Thai bank hours are typically Monday through Friday from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm, though some Thai bank branches, particularly those inside of shopping malls, are open on weekends. Currency exchange booths in Bangkok and other tourist destinations are open on weekends and evenings.

Clinics and Hospitals

Major hospitals in Bangkok have 24 hour emergency rooms, but G.P. appointments are scheduled between 8.00am and 18.00, Monday - Friday. Some larger hospitals offer off-hours and weekend services. If you have a medical emergency you should go to the accident and emergency department of the nearest hospital. Emergency services can be reached by dialing 191 on any phone.

Emergency Services

Emergency services, which can be reached at 191, are generally available 24 hours.

Nightclubs

Nightclubs in Thailand have flexible operating hours. The official closing times are 12/1am depending on the type of establishment, with hotel bars given longer operating hours. Certain clubs, particularly those in tourist destinations including Phuket and Koh Samui, have permission to stay open until 2 or 3am.

Post Offices

The Thailand postal service is reliable and efficient. Thailand post offices are open Monday through Friday from 8am to 4:30pm and Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 1pm. The Bangkok Central GPO on New Road is open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 6pm and on Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 1pm. All Thai post offices are closed on public holidays, though most major hotels can arrange to mail letters and parcels on your behalf.

Restaurants

Restaurant operating hours are highly variable and, as Thai people love to eat, street-side restaurants frequently stay open well past midnight. Restaurants have typically later closing hours in Bangkok and tourist destinations than in the rural provinces.

Supermarkets

Supermarkets are typically open seven days a week from 10am to 9pm. 7-11 convenience stores, located throughout Thailand are generally open 24 hours.

Money Changers

Most foreign currency and traveler's checks are cashed easily at hotels and tourist shops, as well as all provincial banks, shopping centers and money changers. Traveler's checks are best changed in banks, which will often require your passport. Rates of exchange at banks or authorized money changers are better than those at hotels and department stores, whether you want to exchange Thai baht or purchase Thai baht with foreign currency.

Currency

Bank notes are in denominations of 1,000 (beige), 500 (purple), 100 (red), 50 (blue), 20 (green) and the less common 10 (brown) baht. Coins consist of 25 satang, 50 satang, 1 baht, 2 baht, 5 baht and 10 baht. Both Thai baht bank notes and coins are sized according to denomination, with larger value notes and coins correspondingly larger than lesser value ones. Any amount of foreign currency may be brought into the country. Visitors may take foreign currency out of Thailand, but no more than the amount stated in the customs declaration made on arrival. Travelers leaving Thailand may take out no more than 50,000 Thai baht per person in Thai currency.



1,000 Baht Note (Front)



1,000 Baht Note (Back)



500 Baht Note (Front)



500 Baht Note (Back)



100 Baht Note (Front)



100 Baht Note (Back)



50 Baht Note (Front)



50 Baht Note (Back)



20 Baht Note (Front)



20 Baht Note (Back)

Credit Cards

Credit cards are widely accepted, though using a credit card may incur a usage fee of 2-3% which the vendor will typically inform you of before running your card. Furthermore, while most cards give reasonable exchange rates, many credit card companies charge an additional fee for foreign charges.

For lost cards

American Express Tel : 66(0)2-273 5100 or 66(0)81-559-5888

Diners Club Tel : 66(0)2-238 2920 or 66(0)2-238 2680

Master Card Tel : 66(0)2-256 7326 to 7

Visa Tel : 66(0)2-256 7326 to 7

Getting around

In Phuket, taxis, buses, boats, and tuk-tuks are your various choices for exploring the city. In the provinces there are public busses, songtaews (covered pickup trucks with benches in the back).

Motorbike Rental

It is not advisable to hire or ride on motorbikes as there are frequent injury accidents. Many travel insurance policies will not cover you for any costs or medical expenses if you are hurt riding a motorbike.

Songtaew

There are few buses on Phuket and the main form of transport from beach to town is the “Song- taew”, a truck converted to carry passengers in the back on two long benches. They are usually colorful with a sign on front showing where they are going. These vehicles leave from a set stop by the fresh market in Phuket town, reaching every major beach area on the island. They run approximately every hour but there are no fixed scheduled, and they run when there are sufficient passengers. When leaving the beach areas to head back to town they usually cruise around the streets, slowly, picking up passengers. It is slow, but cheap, with the fare from Phuket town to Patong now set at just 25 THB. per person!



Songtaew



Tuk-Tuk

Tuk-Tuk

Tuk-Tuks can be chartered for travel between the beaches and Phuket Town or between different beaches; however, rates are negotiable and will cost at least 200 baht to Patong Beach, 230 baht to Karon and Kata Beaches and 300 baht to Nai Han and Kamala Beaches. Within Phuket Town, Tuk-Tuks should cost 20 baht for short distances.

Always negotiate and agree the cost of the trip BEFORE travelling. Tuk-Tuk drivers are well-known for charging an unrealistic amount at the end of your trip if not agreed before-hand.

Tuk-Tuks are hot, uncomfortable and not suitable for some surgery patients. We recommend giving them a miss.

Taxi Meter

Visitors can call 076 232157-8 to get a metered taxi that will take them anywhere on Phuket. The metered fare will include a 20 baht surcharge.

Shopping

Phuket features outstanding shopping opportunities, from street markets to shopping malls, and visitors can buy souvenir products from all over Thailand, such as Thai silk and chopstick sets, or essential beach supplies, such as swimwear, sun block, and children's beach toys. Locally produced handicrafts that are popular with visitors to Phuket include cultured pearls, pewterware, and dried seafood. Specialist shops dealing in souvenir products can be found in and around Phuket Town and at the more popular beaches of Patong, Kata, Karon, and Rawai.

Jungceylon Plaza is a world class shopping and entertainment destination it is right on the famous lively Patong Beach, the prettiest beach in Phuket, on the corner of Bangla Road and Ra-u-Thit 200 Years Road (Patong Soi 2), the busiest spot on Patong Beach.

Thai Language

While the Thai language is the official language of Thailand, one could say English is its unofficial second language. As tourist and business visitors from around the world have travelled to Thailand, English naturally has become the common linguistic “currency” even while many of those visitors learned how to speak Thai.

Fortunately, road signs are written in both Thai and English, and many tourist areas provide maps, menus, and other literature in both Thai and various other foreign languages.

One problem that does occur for foreigners trying to pronounce Thai words correctly is caused by the transliteration of Thai words into Romanized characters. An obvious example would be the island of Phuket, pronounced "poo-ket" rather than "foo-ket" as it would be pronounced in English.

The everyday greeting and farewell phrases are the same:

sawadee krub (used by men) or sawadee ka (used by women) means "good day" or hello/farewell.

kop khun krub (men) - kop khun ka (women) is a polite "thank you".

Mai aow - (I do) not want (it). This one will fend off vendors and touts very effectively. Add krub (for guys) or ka (if you're female) to make it extra polite - Mai Aow Krub

Telephone (Thailand Phones)

The telephone system in Thailand is both modern and widespread, with reliable pay phones found throughout the kingdom and Thailand cell phone reception covering all but the most remote Thai islands. Furthermore, purchasing a SIM card is both cheap and easy, and internet cafes in most urban areas and all tourist areas have Skype installed on their public computers.

If you are using a Thai phone to call home or call Thailand from overseas, both are quite easy. Thailand's international country code for calling Thailand from overseas is +66, and the code for placing a call to another country from a Thai phone is 001 followed by the country code of the nation you are dialing, (though other long distances providers allow you to dial 007, 008, or 009 rather than 001, but at different, typically higher rates). International operator assistance is available by dialing 110.

When calling Thailand from overseas or calling a Thai phone from within Thailand there is a slight difference. Phone numbers within Thailand begin with an area/city code or a cell phone prefix that is not always used when calling from overseas; For example, the city code for Bangkok is (0)2, the city code for Chiang Mai is (0)53, and the prefix for cell phones is (0)8. When dialing from a Thai phone, one includes the 0, while those calling Thailand from overseas should not include the 0. Consequently, an overseas call to Bangkok would be +66-2..., whereas a call from within Thailand would begin 02....

Emergency numbers are often three or four digit numbers, including Tourist Police, which is 1155.

Public Telephones

Coin operated pay phones are available throughout the country and cost around 1 baht per minute for local calls. Card phones, which operate with either prepaid phone cards or, less frequently, credit cards are also widely available, particularly in large urban and tourist areas; Card phones have variable rates, but can cost up to 18 baht per minute. Prepaid phone cards, which are generally available in 300 baht denominations, are available at convenience stores such as 7-11 and phones accepting these cards are painted yellow and are usually not far from the local 7-11 store. Public telephones that charge by the minute for local and overseas calls are also available at general post offices throughout the kingdom.

Thai Cell Phones

The Thailand cell phone coverage is widespread, with reception available in all areas except at the most remote islands and isolated mountainous regions. Many overseas cell phones will work in Thailand, provided they are GSM compatible, as Thailand features both GSM 900 and 1800 networks. While it may be convenient to have friends and family call Thailand to reach you on your "home" cell phone number, receiving and sending calls is likely to be quite expensive. If your cell phone has a slot to insert a SIM card, such cards are available for a few dollars, either at the airport or in convenience stores such as Seven-11 or IT markets throughout the country. These SIM cards are funded by prepaid phone cards that are available at nearly all convenience stores in the country. If your phone doesn't have a slot for a SIM card, a Thailand cell phone can be picked up at the airport for a reasonable rate or an inexpensive new or second hand cell phone can be easily obtained at locations such as MBK shopping mall in Bangkok.

SIM cards Phone and Micro for iPad

You can purchase pre paid SIM cards from the 7-11 or Family Mart convenience stores near the hotel or in the shopping malls. You will have to buy some credit to go with the SIM card so you can make calls or check emails. Usually the staff are willing to help get your phone up and running. Yes, even in the convenience stores! – welcome to Thai culture.

Food

While noodle dishes are quite common in Thailand most Thai dishes are stir fried or grilled and served with rice. Fish (blah), pork (moo), beef (neua), and chicken (gai) are all prepared in a variety of ways, though typically cut into bite sized pieces and stir fried with various spices, such as garlic, chili, and/or basil. Fish and chicken are frequently grilled or fried, fish typically cooked and served whole.

As Thai meals are typically served family style, with all diners sharing entrees, a Thai curry or soup is usually ordered with a meal. The consistency of each Thai curry varies widely, with some curries arguably classifiable as soups. However, most Thai curries are coconut milk-based and some are spicier than others.

Gaeng Massaman, is a mild, peanut and potato curry; Gaeng Kiaw Wan (Thai green curry) is a curry of medium thickness and spiciness, while Gaeng Daeng (red curry), otherwise known as Gaeng Pet (spicy curry), is a thinner, obviously spicier option. Tom Kha, a mild coconut soup, blurs the lines between soup and curry, while Tom Yam Kung, a quintessential Thai soup, is often blisteringly hot.

While Thai curries are shared and meant to be ladled over rice, soups are served communally with diners receiving small bowls to eat out of. Although some curries and soups can be served without meat for vegetarians, many Thai cooks put fish sauce in all dishes as it's the Thai substitute for salt.

Unlike typical Thai dishes, which are served for communal consumption, most Thai noodle dishes are served as individual dishes. While some restaurants will serve Thai noodle dishes, particularly Pad Thai noodles, noodles are more frequently served and eaten at street stalls that specialize in Thai noodle dishes. Thai noodles come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, including "small" (sen lek), "large" (sen yai), angel hair (sen mee), and x-large (gway tiow). Most Thai noodles are made of rice, though egg noodles (ba mee) and mungbean based glass noodles are also common.

Other than pad Thai noodles, rad naa and gway tiow are stir fried noodles served with beef, chicken, or pork; condiments, including dried chilies, fish sauce, vinegar, and sugar, are available to tailor to individual diner's taste.

Otherwise, Thai noodles are normally served in soup, either with spicy red pork (moo daeng), chicken (on the bone), and occasionally coagulated pigs blood. Unlike most Thai dishes, which are eaten with fork and spoon, Thai noodles are typically eaten with chopsticks and spoon, a reflection of the Chinese origin of the cuisine.

You couldn't tell by looking at slim waistlines of many Thais, but Thai people love to eat dessert. This includes both traditional Thai desserts as well as western fare, including cakes and ice cream. Traditional Thai desserts are quite sweet, made predominately from various combinations of rice, coconut milk, and sugar, along with a few seemingly less common dessert ingredients, such as sweet corn or kidney beans. Some egg based Thai desserts trace their history back to the influence of Portuguese missionaries (who also introduced the chili!) While these desserts are not prominently featured on menus in Thai restaurants and infrequently ordered at the conclusion of a meal, they are occasionally served complimentarily or can be found sold at street stalls that specialize in particular desserts.

Fruit is also a common Thai dessert and is usually served plain and sliced, though mango with sticky rice, covered in sweet coconut milk is a popular dessert when mangos are in season.

A Thai salad is often one of the spiciest Thai dishes and is frequently ordered as one of the many communal dishes in a meal. A Thai salad is generally made of raw vegetables mixed with chili, lime, and fish sauce, though some, such as Yam Neua (Thai beef salad) contain meat.

The most internationally recognized Thai salad, Som Tam is technically a dish of Lao origin, and is most popular in Northeastern Thailand, where it is prepared in a manner that would wreak havoc on the stomach of an unsuspecting visitor unaccustomed to real spicy Thai food. Som Tam consists primarily of shredded papaya and is often served with grilled chicken (gai yang).

Yam som-o, is a more mild salad that is based on the pommels, a fruit similar to, but less sour than, a grapefruit. Yam som-o is usually served with shredded chicken.

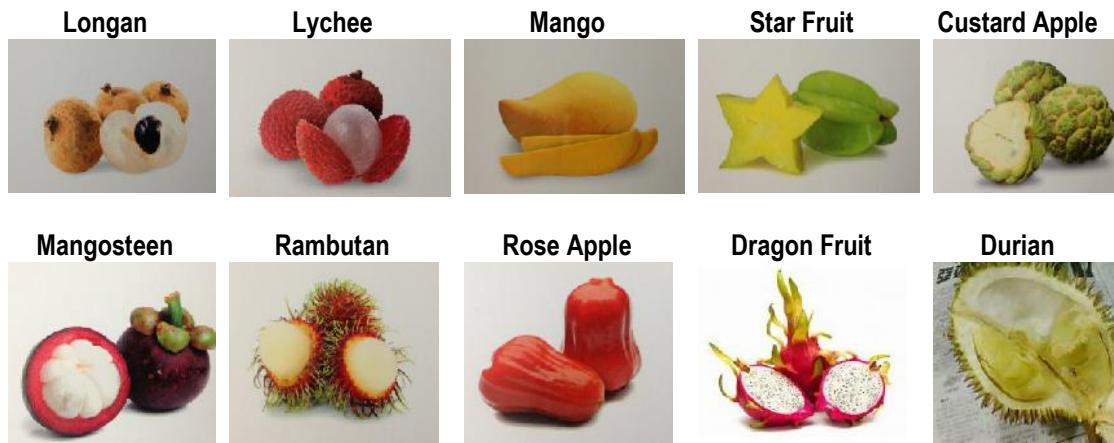
Other salads include Yam Neua, a Thai beef salad served with tomato and onion, and Yam Wonsan, a glass noodle and shrimp salad.

Technically Thai meals don't include appetizers per se; all dishes are ordered at once and come out in random order for diners to share as they arrive. However, there are certainly finger-food style dishes that can be categorized as appetizer style foods. Satay (grilled meat on a stick) and spring rolls are the most common of these, the former available on many street corners and technically classified in Thai cuisine as a snack rather than an appetizer.

Thai chili paste, or nam prik, is the base of many Thai dishes, though variations of it are also served as dips. Thai Chili pastes are made by muddling chili, garlic, shrimp paste, lime, and other spices (depending on region of origin). As a dip, it is served along with raw vegetables and occasionally pork rinds.

Fruit

Thailand is undoubtedly a nation of fruits; fruit vendors sell dozens of different chilled fruits on street corners throughout the kingdom, selling sliced ponelamai (fruit) for as little as 10 baht per serving. Thai fruits include the familiar: banana, pineapple, watermelon, and papaya, as well as the exotic: dragon fruit, chompu, durian, and jackfruit.



Dragon fruit is a large, odd looking fruit, with pink spiky skin, though beneath the extravagant exterior is a tender white meat akin to a mellow, juicy kiwi fruit. Chompu is a refreshing pear-shaped fruit that tastes something like a watery apple. The pungent smelling durian and its mellower cousin the jack fruit require an acquired palate, their flavors and textures revered by some and reviled by others; in fact so strong is the smell of the durian that it's not infrequent to see "no durian" signs inside many buildings!

Mangos are served both ripe and juicy and unripe and excruciatingly tart, a taste that Thai's typically balance by dipping in a mixture of sugar and chili.

There are literally dozens of other exotic Thai fruits, available seasonally, and always reasonably priced. Buy a bunch and share with friends; they make economical and healthy snacks.

While tap water is not generally recommended for consumption, ice is generally safe in Thailand and bottled water is ubiquitous and cheap. If you are concerned, you can always stick with Thai beer, it's nearly as cheap and the high alcohol content of Thai beer ensures that any germs aren't likely to survive; Singha (pronounced "Sing") and Chang (which means elephant) are the two most popular.

Fruit smoothies and fruit juice are both very popular: smoothies made with fresh fruit and sugar syrup are blended with ice that is generally safe to consume. Coconut milk is another safe option as the coconut is simply cracked open from the top and served whole with a straw.

Thai ice tea is served with condensed milk, which gives it a pinkish orange color and sweet flavor. Thai ice coffee (oliang) is a strong black pick me up far superior to the Nescafe that is so often served as "coffee" in many restaurants. Otherwise, there are many Starbucks throughout the Kingdom, particularly in Bangkok, if you really need a quick coffee fix.

Finally, red bull energy drink was invented in Thailand and can be procured at 7-11 and mom and pop minimarts for 10 baht. There are other local brands, but taste and potency vary widely.

WHEN YOU LEAVE

VAT Refunds

VAT refunds do not apply to services such as surgery or dental treatment.

Goods purchased in Thailand are VAT inclusive. However, foreign visitors (with a few exceptions) have the benefit to receive a 7% VAT refund on luxury goods purchased from shops that participate in the 'VAT Refund for Tourists' scheme. When you see a 'VAT Refund for Tourists' sign, you can receive a 7% refund of the VAT levied on goods at the shop. However, certain conditions apply, and you won't be able to claim your refund until you depart Thailand from an international airport.

Goods must be purchased from stores displaying the 'VAT Refund For Tourists' sign. VAT refunds only apply to goods taken out of Thailand within 60 days from the date of purchase. Goods must have a value of at least 5,000 baht (including VAT), and single purchases must have a value of at least 2,000 baht per day.

On the day of purchase, present your passport and request the sales assistant at the store to complete the VAT Refund Application for Tourists form (P.P.10) and attach the original tax invoice to the form. Each application form must show a value of goods of 2,000 baht or more.

Before departure, present your goods and VAT Refund Application for Tourists form to Customs officers for inspection before check-in at the airport. Luxury goods, such as jewellery, gold ornaments, watches, glasses, or pens must once more be inspected by the Revenue officers at the VAT Refund Office at the departure lounge. You can present your claim to the Revenue officers, mail it back to the Revenue Department of Thailand, or drop it into the box in front of the VAT Refund Office.

Refund Fees

For cash refunds, there is a fee of 100 baht. For bank draft refund, a few 100 baht plus a draft issuing fee at the rate charged by banks plus postage fees. For credit to credit card account refund, a few 100 baht plus a money transfer fee at rate charged by banks and postal fees.

Refund Methods

For purchases not exceeding 30,000 baht, refunds will be made in cash, i.e. Thai baht, by bank draft or credit to your credit card account. For purchases exceeding 30,000 baht, the refund will be made by bank draft or credit to your credit card account.

Refund Conditions

Refunds will not be granted in the following cases:

- Name or passport number not on original tax invoice attached to the VAT Refund Application form
- Value of goods purchased is less than 2,000 baht per day per store.
- Your purchased items fall under the following category: gem stones, fire arms or explosives, prohibited items
- VAT Refund Application for Tourist form was not prepared on the date of purchase.
- Total value of goods claimed for refund is less than 5,000 baht.
- Original tax invoices were not attached to the VAT Refund for Tourist form.
- You did not carry the goods out of Thailand on the day of your departure.
- Goods were not purchased from participating shops in the VAT Refund for Tourists scheme.
- Quantity of goods shown in the VAT Refund Application for Tourist form is less than that shown in the original tax invoice.
- Goods were taken out of Thailand without being inspected by Customs or Revenue officers.
- Luxury goods were taken out of Thailand without being checked by the Revenue officers.
- Tax invoices attached to the VAT Refund Application for Tourist were issued from a different store than mentioned on form
- You carry a diplomatic passport and reside in Thailand.
- You are an airline crew member departing Thailand on duty.
- Your stay in Thailand exceeds 180 days in a calendar year.
- Goods were not taken out of Thailand within 60 days after date of purchase.
- You didn't depart Thailand from an international airport.

If you have leftover Thai Baht, you can spend them before entering Passport Control at any number of merchants or food/drink outlets. There are even airport branches of the Family Mart convenience store located on Level 3 and 4 of the terminal building. Prices at the airport are the same as at city-centre branches of Family Mart, which is a real deal compared to the other stores in the airport. This is a great place for a delayed traveller to grab a quick snack. Remember that no liquids, gel or aerosols (greater than 3ozs/100ml) are allowed past security checkpoints (without proper exemption).

If you want a more substantial meal, you can also visit the "locals" food court (located on Floor 1) called "Magic Food Centre" which is open 24/7. It operates on a 'coupon' system. You have to buy coupons with Thai baht to cover the cost of your meal. You can return unused coupons for a refund when you leave.

Many of the international departure gates involve a fairly long walk. Therefore it is a good idea to start heading for your gate well before the time printed on your boarding card.

DO'S & DON'TS

Thai culture

Thai culture is incredibly warm and welcoming; Thai people are both open to other people's religious and political beliefs and very proud of their own culture. However, while sensitive to the behavior of others, Thai people follow some cultural practices that can be awkward for some visitors. Typically, Thais will not show overt displeasure at someone violating these Thailand cultural norms. Such behavior is actually an important aspect of Thai culture: Thais do not get visibly upset at others! That said, it's better to be aware of these aspects of Thai culture and behave accordingly.

The Monarchy

In Thai culture, people have a deep, traditional reverence for the royal family, and visitors should be careful to show respect for the King, the Queen and the royal family, as well as any image of royal family members. It is unacceptable to speak ill of the royal family and it is required by both the standards of Thai culture as well as Thai law to stand in honor of the King prior to movie screenings and other public events.

Religion

Visitors should dress neatly in all religious shrines. They should never enter a temple topless, or in shorts, sleeveless shirts, or other unsuitable attire. It is acceptable to wear shoes when walking around the compound of a Buddhist temple, but not inside the chapel where the principal Buddha image is kept.

Each Buddha image, large or small, ruined or not, is regarded as a sacred object. Never climb onto one to take a photograph nor do anything which might indicate a lack of respect. Buddhist monks are forbidden to touch or be touched by a woman, or to accept anything from the hand of one. If a woman has to give anything to a monk, she should first hand it to a man, who can then present it to the monk or she should place it on the ground or table within reach of a monk. Monks are similarly not allowed to sit next to women on public transportation, so women should be courteous and not occupy an empty seat next to a monk and cause him to stand.

Social Norms of Thailand Culture

Thais don't normally shake hands when they greet one another, but instead press their palms together in a prayer-like gesture called a wai. Generally, a younger person or person of lesser social status "waits" an elder or more senior person, who then returns the gesture.

Thais regard the head as the highest part of the body and the feet as the lowest, both literally and figuratively. Therefore, avoid touching people on the head and try not to point your feet at people or an object. It is considered very rude. Shoes should be removed when entering a private Thai home and some places of business.

Overt public displays of affection between men and women are frowned upon, much as public displays of anger are.

SPECIAL ADVICE

Beware of unauthorized people who offer their services as guides. For all tourist information, contact the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Tel: 1672. For information about Bangkok, contact the Bangkok Metropolitan Tourist Bureau, Tel :66(0)2-225 7612 to 4.

Observe all normal precautions regarding your personal safety, as well as the safety of your belongings. Walking alone on quiet streets or deserted areas is not recommended. Be sure that all your valuables-money, jewellery, and airline tickets are properly protected from loss. Visitors needing assistance relating to safety, unethical practices, or other matters, please call the Tourist Police at Tel: 1155.

Drop your garbage into a waste container. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is beginning to strictly enforce the littering law in an effort to keep the city clean. The fine will be imposed on a person who spits, discards cigarette stubs, or drops rubbish in public areas.

Do not get yourself involved with drugs. Penalties for drug offences are very severe in Thailand.

Do not support any manner of wild animal abuse. Never purchase any products or souvenirs made from wild animals including snake or monitor lizard skin, turtle shells, and ivory. Avoid patronizing local restaurants that serve wild animal delicacies. It is against the law to slaughter wildlife for food in Thailand.

Disclaimer: Stunning Makeovers Ltd hope you find the tips and information helpful and we wish you an enjoyable time in Thailand. While we have endeavoured to provide you with correct information to our best knowledge we do not take responsibility for and apologise if the information is out of date. The views, opinions, conclusions and other information expressed are not endorsed by us.