

Packing List & Instructions

THAILAND: BUDDHIST TRADITIONS & THAI CULTURE

Thailand: Buddhist Traditions and Thai Culture is an active program where you will have the opportunity to visit many different regions of Thailand. It is hot and humid during the summer, so bring cool, lightweight clothing. Please note that it will also be the rainy season during your visit, making quick-drying and waterproof clothing ideal. Keep in mind that this is a modest country; please plan your clothing accordingly. Gift-giving is also very common, and we encourage small gifts for your hosts, community service leaders, and new friends—small items that reflect your interests are best (e.g., souvenirs from home, magnets, stickers, pencils, American candies, etc.).

You will be responsible for carrying your own luggage. *The most important packing advice is to **pack lightly**— whether you pack in a duffel bag, a rolling suitcase, or a large backpack, you should be able to carry (not roll) your luggage up two flights of stairs and across the length of a football field.* When determining what luggage is appropriate, it is important to consider program itinerary and group activities. For more rugged programs with lots of travel and outdoor activities, a larger outdoor camping backpack may be more manageable but certainly not required.

The list on the following page has been suggested by past participants and leaders. You will have opportunities to do laundry while on program, oftentimes during your homestay. Even though your program may be three or four weeks, pack for about a week. Even though we provide a comprehensive packing list, it is good practice to research the temperature and climate of your program country before you depart. These can vary from year to year, so it is important to check current and expected conditions for your program abroad and pack accordingly.

A Note on Dress

Thailand is a conservative Buddhist country, and *while living in the homestay community it will be of utmost importance to dress as modestly as possible.* To be treated with kindness and respect, you must respect the local culture by dressing appropriately. No shorts, tank tops, low-cut shirts, or V-necks are to be worn by women. Bottoms should come down to the knee and tops should come up to the neckline. Leggings are only appropriate if worn with a dress or blouse that falls below mid-thigh. The black skirt (for orientation) must come down below the knee, and the white shirt should be loose-fitting. Loose-fitting clothing will not only be appropriate, but also more comfortable in the heat. Finding clothing like this in the US is quite difficult, but once arriving in Chiang Mai you will have ample opportunity to shop for these types of items at a much lower cost in the markets. For girls, swimming in bathing suits—especially bikinis—in the village is inappropriate; please bring at least one outfit that is fast-drying and comfortable for swimming (e.g., athletic shorts and a quick-drying t-shirt). For boys, modesty is a non-issue, and both bathing suits and tank tops are considered appropriate. While in cities, modesty is a bit more laid-back, so girls can feel free to bring an outfit or two, and a bathing suit, that are less modest for the non-homestay segments of the trip. Shorts are also okay in cities when not visiting a temple.

In general, you will want your clothes to be comfortable, compact, versatile, and quick to dry (since access to an electric dryer will be extremely limited). You will not need more than one nice outfit, suitable for perhaps a religious ceremony or celebratory dinner. Shoes should be comfortable, broken in, and versatile—bring as few pairs as possible—3 is more than enough. Layering is recommended for changing temperatures rather than bringing bulky sweaters and jackets.

Notes from our Team

Prescription Medications

Make sure to keep any **prescription medications or vitamins in their original containers**, and bring a **sufficient amount for the entire duration of your program, plus extra** in case of travel delays. Bring a **paper copy of your prescription from your doctor** in case you lose your medication. Travel with **all essential medications in your carry-on luggage**. If you are diabetic and **traveling with syringes, bring a certificate or letter from your doctor**.

Rescue Medications

If you use any rescue medications and or devices (i.e. medications intended for the immediate relief of serious symptoms like an EPI pen or albuterol inhaler) you must travel with **one or more backup supplies of this medication or device**. (e.g. A participant who uses an inhaler would travel with at least two inhalers, while a participant with a severe allergy might travel with several EPI pens.) Comparable therapies can be very difficult to obtain while traveling.

Other Medications

While you will not need an entire pharmacy, do bring **the medication you normally use for minor ailments like body aches, upset stomach, bug bites, common cold, seasonal allergies etc**. A travel first aid kit from your local pharmacy is recommended. All medications should be in original packaging with the package insert if possible to avoid seizure at customs.

Toiletries and Sanitary Items

Please bring the toiletries and sanitary items you are accustomed to using. It is recommended to bring enough feminine hygiene products for the duration of the program. It is often difficult to find the items you are used to using while abroad.

Corrective Lenses

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, please bring extra pairs and extra contact cases, as these are often difficult to replace if lost. If you use contact solution to clean your lenses, bring plenty of the type you prefer as this can also be difficult to acquire abroad. Consider program itinerary and activities when choosing appropriate eyewear.

Please direct any questions or concerns to medicalteam@experiment.org

Valuables and Electronics

The Experiment is not responsible for any items lost, misplaced or stolen. It would be best to not bring large electronics, laptops, iPads, tablets, hairdryers, or other items that you would consider expensive to replace. If you choose to bring small electronics (your digital camera or cell phone) remember to bring your own adaptor, batteries, and voltage converter (which can be obtained from a travel store or pharmacy. More info about electricity, voltage, and adapters can be found here: www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/).

Gifts

While not required, it is nice to be prepared with a gift to offer your homestay family in gratitude for their hospitality and to share a part of your culture with them. Gifts do not need to be expensive or elaborate. We suggest one or two gifts that the whole family can enjoy; you do not need a gift for each member. Try to choose gifts that represent you or the part of the country and/or community you live in. Think about what your city, state, or local artisans produce (for example, a Vermonter could bring a small bottle of maple syrup). Postcard books and other souvenir items from your hometown are good options. Draw upon your personal interests or hobbies for ideas.

Clothing Recommended

- 1 lightweight sweater/sweatshirt/light fleece
- 1 light rain jacket
- 5–6 cotton t-shirts (no tank tops for women or midriff shirts)
- 1–2 quick-drying synthetic shirts
- 2 pairs of lightweight pants (lightweight hiking pants are great)
- 3–4 pairs of long shorts (men)/skirts (women)—**must be below the knee**
- 1 white collared shirt for orientation
- 1 pair of black/navy slacks or skirt (for women) for orientation—**skirt must come down below the knee (no leggings)**
- 1 set of sleeping clothes
- 12 pairs of underwear
- 3–4 pairs of socks
- 1 modest swimsuit (swim shorts and t-shirts are culturally appropriate)
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/light hiking boots—make sure they are broken in!
- 1 pair of sturdy sandals (e.g., tevas, chacos, etc.)
- 1 pair of house shoes/slippers/flip-flops—used only inside
- 1-2 nice outfits and pairs of shoes for special occasions

Gear Recommended

- 1 small set of toiletries—should be smaller than your head!
- 1 small towel—quick-drying microfiber towels are great!
- Sunglasses and hat with brim
- Money belt
- Earplugs for light sleepers

- Travel watch with alarm—a watch is necessary since you may not be able to use your cell phone as a timekeeping tool
- Reusable and durable water bottle (1 liter) - **REQUIRED**
- Small notebook and pens
- Small thai-english dictionary—the thai-english english-thai dictionary for non-thai speakers spells out thai words phonetically to make it easier for foreigners to attempt to pronounce the words, rather than having the thai word written in thai script as most dictionaries do; this can easily be purchased on amazon.com
- Small flashlight/headlamp with extra batteries- **REQUIRED**
- Comfortable work gloves
- Camera, charger and adapters or extra batteries
- Insect repellent with deet— **REQUIRED**
- Hand sanitizer
- Sunscreen and lip protection (spf 30)
- Travel size detergent, biodegradable if available – laundry pods or bar laundry soap are great options
- Plastic bags (small ziplocs and a few large garbage-size bags)—great for wet/dirty clothes and keeping clean clothes dry
- 1 small backpack for day trips—can be your school backpack
- School id – it’s okay if you do not have one
- Host family gift and other small gifts

Optional Items Recommended

- Journal and pen
- Mailing addresses for friends and family to send postcards
- Printed photos of family or friends
- Small game of cards, uno, bananagrams

***A note about mosquito nets:** Malaria is not a problem in Chiang Mai, but all participants should bring ample insect repellent (including DEET to be most effective). Participants can bring a mosquito net for the homestay, but we do not recommend one. Mosquito nets for beds can be purchased for about \$10.

DON'T FORGET YOUR PASSPORT OR RESIDENCY CARD IF APPLICABLE!!!!!!!!!!

Where to start: A great place to visit for these types of travel clothes and gear is an outdoors store such as REI and EMS. These places will have waterproof, light weight, quick drying and versatile clothing options specifically made for travel and backpacking. They can also talk you through layering techniques and give you gear recommendations. These stores tend to be a little pricey so don't forget to check for second-hand outdoor gear stores locally as well!

