A QUICK GUIDE FOR VISITORS TO MORU – JULY 2016

This quick guide for visitors to MORU provides some brief, simple pointers to help you prepare for your trip. A more comprehensive guide to Thailand is available and should be reviewed if you are visiting for more than a few days. If you have any questions contact Ms. Phung at phung@tropmedres.ac.

MORU makes no claims, promises or guarantees about accuracy, completeness or adequacy of the contents of this article and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in the contents of this article.

KEY INFORMATION

OUR ADDRESS
MORU Tropical Health Network
Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University
420/6 Rajvithi Road, Phyathai, Rajthevi Bangkok 10400 THAILAND
TEL: +662 203 6333 FAX:+662 354 9169 WEBSITE:www.tropmedres.ac
Office hours 08.30-16.30 Monday - Friday

COMMUNICATIONS
Emergency numbers are: Police: 191 Fire Brigade: 199 First Aid: 1669.
The country code is +66 and local calls are 9 digits. Thailand SIM Cards are cheap, readily available from convenience stores.

CURRENCY
The currency of Thailand is the Baht (THB). Notes are available in paper denominations of 20; 50; 100; 500; 1,000; and also in metal denominations of 0.25; 0.50; 1; 5; 10. Credit cards are acceptable in the major hotels, stores and restaurants and there are many ATMs around Bangkok and smaller towns.

ELECTRICITY
Thailand operates a 220/240 volts, 50Hz power supply.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT
Bangkok is typically 30°C - 38°C throughout the year. The rainy season months are between May and October/November - the relatively cool season is between December and February, and the fiercely hot and humid season is between March and May. Current Bangkok Weather

LANGUAGE
Thai is spoken everywhere except in the refugee camps on the borders. English is increasingly widely spoken, but it is usually not understood extensively in rural areas.

TIME ZONE
Thailand falls within the UTC/GMT+7 time zone. Daylight saving time is not used.
RELIGION
Thailand is a Buddhist country. Do not wear shorts or sandals when visiting temples (Wats). Women should not touch or sit next to monks.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

PASSPORT
Your passport should have at least 6 months before expiry and at least 2 blank Visa pages.

VISA
Different countries have different arrangements for their citizens to visit Thailand. For most up to date information, check your local Thai Embassy office for more information. Consider the length of stay, re-entry requirements, if you need to get it in advance or upon arrival, option to extend and the fees and paperwork required.

If you are come to Thailand as contract employee, you will need to apply for Non-immigrant visa. Please contact Ms. Phung (phung@tropmedres.ac), Head of Administration and HR Manager to clarify documents needed.

GENERAL TRAVEL ADVICE
You are recommend to check your local government Foreign Office website for the most up to date travel advice.

INSURANCE
All visitors must have full travel and health insurance before coming to Thailand, including medical evacuation to home country and cover for unexpected losses/expenses (eg. Cancelled flights, lost passport, stolen cash etc). MORU Contract Employees, may be covered by, please check with Ms. Phung phung@tropmedres.ac.

HEALTH ADVICE
In general the risks of a visitor to Thailand acquiring any serious infection are extremely low. Travellers should seek advice from their doctor before travelling for their individual regime of vaccinations, boosters and medicines. When in Thailand, most generic drugs easily available from private pharmacies but you should bring your own prescription drugs.

WHEN YOU ARE HERE

ARRIVAL IN BANGKOK BY AIR
International Visitors travelling by air will arrive at Suvarnabhumi International Airport. Please see Suvarnabhumi airport for facilities, information and travel to/from the airport.

Don Muang Airport is now use for mostly domestic flights and lowcost airline.

ACCOMMODATION
A range of accommodation options are available for visitors within easy reach of the office and can be arranged by MORU. Contact phung@tropmedres.ac.
PAYONG MANSION – A sharing unit-rent apartment located in Ari 3, rooms are generally available for elective student and visitors with no cost. No towel will be provided, so will need to bring your own. On occasion, all rooms may be taken so early contact is advised.

VIC 3 HOTEL - A boutique hotel in Sanam Pao ~ THB 2,000 with complimentary breakfast and internet, http://www.vic3bangkok.com/


CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE
As everywhere in Asia, it pays to have a sunny disposition and to be polite. Whilst generally people are forgiving of cultural indiscretions, it is important to be prepared as social interactions and cultural mores are complicated. A few basic tips include;

- To show respectful greeting, Thai people do the ‘Wai’, joining the palms of their hands and bowing their heads.
- The head is considered to be the highest and purest part of human body by the Thai people (and should not be touched by others).
- Therefore, pointing at someone or touching someone with feet is considered to be highly disrespectful.
- It is mandatory to remove one’s footwear before entering a temple or a house and it is not uncommon to see shoes outside some shops and restaurants.
- It does no good to lose one’s temper and raise one’s voice.

DRESS
Most styles are acceptable in the city centre. In hospitals and offices it is advisable to wear reasonably neat clothes. Male visitors should dress shirt with collar and trousers. Female visitor should dress in long trousers or a skirt longer than knee and shirt covering the shoulders.

SECURITY
Thailand is a relatively safe country for tourists but you should be aware of the usual petty crime that can occur in big cities such as pick-pocketing and bag snatching by passing motorbikes.

GETTING AROUND
There are a number of options for getting around Bangkok when the heat and walking gets too much.

BTS – Bangkok is equipped with a Skytrain which is affordable and covers two lines Sukhumvit Line from Bearing to Mor Chit and Silom Line from National Stadium to Wonwien Yai. Single tickets can be purchased at stations (starting at 15 baht, up to around 50 Baht per journey) or a smart pass can be used and topped up with credit.

MRT – Separately from the BTS, the MRT requires a different ticket but can be travelled on Chaloem Ratchamongkhon Line from Hua Lampong –Bangsue.
**Airport Link** – Suvarnabhumi Airport can also be accessed by the Airport Link which is cheap, clean and convenient. Tickets costs 45 THB between the airport and Phaya Thai where you can then take the BTS onwards.

**Public taxis** - Taxis are relatively cheap and very common. Ensure you use only TAXI METER that have a sign on the roof and ensure they put the meter on.

**Tuk-tuks** – Tuk tuks are also convenient and alternatives to taxis for short trips but are not much cheaper and require negotiation.

**Motorbikes** - Whilst available and popular, we do not recommend visitors use motorbike taxis.

**Public Buses are available** along most major routes. These are very cheap but can be crowded at peak times.

**EATING AND DRINKING**
Thai food is fantastic and the options are endless. There are some specifically vegetarian restaurants in the city, but most places can serve a few vegetarian dishes but make sure you specify when you order that you do not eat ANY meat/fish.

You should not drink the tap water. Bottled water is cheap and readily available for drinking.

**TIPPING**
Tipping is common amongst Thai customers, and may be expected in places frequented by Westerners. It’s nice to tip taxi drivers or in small coffee shops & street restaurants, etc. In up- market restaurants and hotels a 10% tip is sufficient.

Thailand is a wonderful country which has something for everyone to enjoy.