



# GVI Thailand Groups Field Manual

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## Arrival

Please note that arrival logistics may be altered at short notice – check for updates regularly to ensure you are aware of any late changes.

### Where do I need to be?

Phuket International Airport (HKT). All volunteers will be met by GVI staff outside of international arrival gate 4, the main gate upon departing the baggage claim area and exiting the airport. GVI staff will be wearing t-shirts supporting the GVI logo, as well as holding signs with the GVI logo and expected volunteer names.

### When do I need to get there?

Between 08:00am – 16:00pm on the program start date. We advocate booking flights within this window, as it ensures all volunteers arrive safely at the same time and are greeted by GVI staff. Any volunteers arriving before 08:00am will begin their program alone, as staff will be unable to arrive earlier due to program field commitments and travel time to the airport. The program base is approximately 2-hour's drive from the airport, resulting in the recommended 16:00pm cut-off arrival time to ensure all volunteers arrive at base for their welcome dinner together. Any volunteers arriving later than 16:00pm will reach base separate from their colleagues, which we feel impacts the initial arrival experience and team bonding.

### How do I get there?

You will need to book an international flight to arrive at Phuket International Airport (HKT), between the hours of 08:00am – 16:00pm on the program start date. Upon landing, volunteers should make their way through customs and baggage claim to arrive at international arrival gate 4. They will be greeted outside of gate 4 by GVI staff members, wearing GVI branded t-shirts and carrying welcome signs with the GVI logo and volunteer names. Volunteers may be required to wait at the airport or another location for some time depending on flight arrival time, to ensure the entire group arrive and depart the airport for the program base as a group. For this reason, please be sure to inform GVI of your flight details.

### Departure

At the end of your placement GVI will transfer you back to Phuket Airport. From there you are responsible for arranging your own transport onwards; we recommend that you book flights with a check-in **before** 5pm.

## Pre-Program Accommodation

Volunteers arriving in Phuket before 08:00am on the program start date, will be required to arrange their own pre-program accommodation at their own cost. As previously stated, we advocate all volunteers arrive within the window where they will be met by GVI staff, to ensure their safety and comfort upon reaching a foreign country alone. However, should this be impossible then the following are accommodation options nearby:

- Airport Mansion Phuket (Booking.com, free airport transfer)
- Phuket Airport Residence (airport surcharge or walking distance from the airport)  
Phuket Airport Place (<http://phuketairportplace.com>)
- 24/7 Hotel (agoda.com, airport surcharge or walking distance from the airport)
- Marina Express Aviator Phuket Airport (booking.com, airport surcharge or walking distance from the airport)

Any volunteers staying in pre-program accommodation, will also be responsible for arranging to meet GVI staff within the arrival window on the program start date. GVI will need to be made aware of this time prior to the program start date.

## **Departure**

Please note that neither GVI nor our partners in the field can be held responsible for missed travel connections when departing the program. Therefore, we recommend that volunteers again book flights between 08:00am – 16:00pm on the program departure date. As such, GVI staff can ensure volunteers arrive at Phuket International airport in time to support them through their flight check in. Any volunteers with flights departing after 16:00pm on the program departure date, will be required to stay in the airport or post-program accommodation alone. Out of necessity GVI staff must return to the program base at 16:00pm, as new volunteer groups arrive, and in-turn require their support.

## **Visa Requirements**

It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct visa for your trip.

Field staff advise that you enter the country using a Non-Immigrant O Visa. You will need to apply for this in advance from a Thai Consulate and GVI will provide the required documentation.

## **Communications**

This program is run by GVI Thailand in-country staff. Their professional and experienced team will be your primary point of contact when in the field and will do their best to help resolve issues you encounter and answer your questions.

Primary Contact:

Vanessa Rees, Program Manager

Tel: +[66] 80 719 9171

Local Tel: 080 719 9171

Email:

[phangnga@gviworld.com](mailto:phangnga@gviworld.com)

Secondary Contact:

Bob Forester, GVI Staff Team

Tel: +66 63 586 1561

Local Tel: 063 586 1561

Email: [thailandservicelearning@gviworld.com](mailto:thailandservicelearning@gviworld.com)

Tertiary Contact:

Country Director

Tel: +85511586451

Email: [molly.plexico@gviworld.com](mailto:molly.plexico@gviworld.com)

## **GVI 24-hr Emergency Contact:**

Tel: +44(0)2080903080

Dialing from the USA/Canada:

011 44 2080903080

Rest of the world: 0044 2080903080

## **Keeping in Touch**

Participants typically use Wi-Fi when available to keep in touch, having access to internet every day or two when you have a break from work. Mobile/cell phones are affordable and Thai Sim cards are extremely cheap. You can buy top off cards for reasonably priced calls in and out of Thailand. Phone shops are plentiful throughout the area.

Physical address:

GVI, FAO:[Your Name]

167/13 Moo 2, Ban Nam Khem Road

Ban Muang Takuapa

Phang Nga  
Thailand  
82190

(Delivery of larger items by courier, e.g. lost luggage)

If your bags go missing in transit, **don't panic!** This does occasionally happen, and you are usually reunited with your belongings within a few days. Consult airline representatives in the baggage claim area. You may be given a file/reference number; it is wise to also ask for a contact telephone number for follow-up.

## **Living Conditions**

Facilities will be more basic than you are accustomed to – please travel with an open mind and a willingness to adapt to local conditions.

Accommodation is in a hotel with shared rooms with shared bathroom facilities; there is running warm water available for showers. Drinking water will be provided. Flush toilet facilities are available.

## **Food**

Breakfast may include cereal, milk, toast, jam and fresh fruit. Lunch & dinner will typically include rice or noodles with curries, stir fries or other delicious Thai dishes. Expect to eat a lot of rice and be prepared for spice. It is easy to cater for vegetarians, but please let staff know in advance.

## **Electricity**

Supply: 220V 50Hz  
Source: Mains (quite reliable)  
Sockets: US style (no earth) is most common

## **Laundry**

You have your choice of hand washing or having your laundry washed by a local service.

## **Getting Around and Exploring Further Security**

For information about security issues in the country you are travelling to please see the following resources:

UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office:  
[www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

US Government State Department:  
[www.state.gov/travel](http://www.state.gov/travel)

Information for Canadians Abroad:  
[www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca)

Australian Government Travel Advice:  
[www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au)

New Zealand Government Travel Advice:  
[www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz)

Whenever travelling you should be aware of the risk of opportunist crime and take common sense precautions to minimise the chance of becoming a victim. The vast majority of visits are trouble-free, but if you have any specific questions about your safety and security on the program please contact GVI.

## Finance

### Local currency: **Thai Baht**

Participants typically spend approximately 2,000 baht (US\$60) per week for internet, phone credit, snacks, drinks, side trips, etc. We recommend that you travel with cash as your main source of funds, although having a debit/credit card as a backup is wise; ATMs are widely available. Traveller's checks and foreign currencies can only be exchanged in limited locations, so are not recommended.

## Background Check

A background/police check is required for this program

## Health & Safety

The nearest emergency medical facilities are located in Takua Pa, close to work placements. At the program base and work locations we adhere to a strict code of health and safety. All staff are first aid certified and anyone staying on base receives a health and safety briefing upon arrival. Please note that GVI cannot provide specific medical advice. Please consult your primary care provider (doctor, GP, etc.) or visit a travel clinic for further information.

The minimum legal age for the purchase of cigarettes in Thailand is 18. Please keep in mind that you will not be allowed to purchase cigarettes during the duration of the programme. Under 18 participants are not allowed to consume alcohol and if found doing so, will be dismissed from the program.

## Pre Departure Training

Staff in the field will provide training on the skills required, but you may benefit from learning more about local history, culture and customs before you travel.

For Thai language: [www.learningthai.com](http://www.learningthai.com) contains sound clips so you can hear how the words and phrases are pronounced

[www.thailand.com/travel/learnthai/learnthai\\_intro\\_introduction.htm](http://www.thailand.com/travel/learnthai/learnthai_intro_introduction.htm) comprehensive Thai language for beginner

[www.omniglot.com/writing/thai.htm](http://www.omniglot.com/writing/thai.htm) Introduction to the Thai language with links to a number of sites for learning Thai

General Thailand info:

[www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org) the official website for tourism in Thailand from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)

[www.backpackthailand.com/home.htm](http://www.backpackthailand.com/home.htm) provides a plethora of basic information for travelling in Thailand

[www.travelfish.org](http://www.travelfish.org) offers comprehensive information about Thailand and Southeast Asia with detailed information about specific areas, including Krabi and the southern provinces

[www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) is a reliable website for project country information

## Packing List

### Essential Equipment

These are items which staff in the field have deemed as required, or which previous volunteers all agree are must-haves.

- **Large Rucksack** (Backpack): (65+ litres / 4,000+ cubic inches) for carrying the bulk of your gear to base. You could use a suitcase instead.
- **1 Daypack** (Backpack): (25+ litres / 1,500+ cubic inches) Good for side trips and weekends away.
- **1 pair of walking boots / trainers / sneakers** An old but comfortable pair of trainers/sneakers are great for working
- **1 pair of sandals (flip-flops / thongs)** you will use these regularly around base and in town. A sporty sandal with a back strap comes in handy for side trips and community projects.
- **2 pairs of shorts**, to the knee **2 pairs of working trousers** **2 working shirts** **Casual clothing**
- **Long-sleeved clothing** as in all tropical countries, insects can be a nuisance especially in the evening. Long sleeved shirts and trousers offer the best form of protection.
- **Waterproof jacket / Poncho** During the rainy season it does rain!
- **Swimming trunks / costume / bikini** We do have dry spells too and it's always nice to go for a swim. Bring along shorts and a T-shirt for swimming in the village
- **Underwear**
- **Towel** x 2. An old and worn towel will dry more quickly, or you can buy a quick-drying travel towel. A sarong is definitely a useful extra.
- **Sunglasses** make sure they offer 100% UV protection. Cheap glasses can cause more damage than good.
- **Hat, wide-brimmed or cap**
- **Insect repellent** You will use loads of this!
- **Water bottles / Camelbak / Platypus water bladder**
- **Toiletries** You can buy toiletries locally though you may not be able to get your favourite brand–
- Biodegradable shampoos are hard to find in Thailand but are recommended.
- **Hand sanitizer**
- **Any prescribed medication** you need during your trip. Make sure it bears your name and description of reason and dosage.
- **Sun cream** high factor, at least SPF15+.
- **Torch/Flashlight** a strong powerful flashlight/torch or a headlamp.
- **Watch** time-keeping is essential on all projects.
- **Alarm clock** for those early mornings!
- **Electrical adaptor** to convert both socket style and voltage if necessary
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#### Highly Recommended Equipment

- **Camera**
- **Money belt** (bum bag / fanny pack) to carry money and passport discreetly.

#### Optional Equipment

- **Headscarf / shamrag / bandana / baseball cap** some kind of headwear is useful as a rag to dry off sweat!
- **Travel games / Cards**
- **Books** some novels have been left at camp by others but new additions are always welcome. **CD players / MP3 player / World Service Radio** remember headphones!

#### Hints on Buying Kit

The humidity is always high and it will likely rain (particularly during the rainy season May-October) so be sure to bring some waterproof accessories like a light waterproof poncho/jacket and umbrella. It is likely to be hot so bring along light airy clothes. We are in a conservative community so make sure you have appropriate teaching clothes and clothes to wear in rural communities. Don't bring only beachwear (though bring some for your 4 day holiday). If swimming in rural communities you should wear T-shirt and shorts so come prepared. Be aware that leather items (belts, shoes) are especially prone to mould. Quick-drying clothes are always recommended since it can be difficult to dry clothes when it is raining. Denim jeans are terrible for this! Before setting off in search of your essential kit, compile a list of everything that you need. When buying your kit you may find that by mentioning to the store assistants (or ideally the manager) that you are joining a volunteer project enables you to negotiate a discount on your purchases. Often stores are authorised to offer a discount (typically 10-15%) at their discretion, so it is always worth mentioning that the kit is required in aid of a good cause. Shop around for kit. If you are never going to use items again then it is not worth going for the top brands! Cheap lightweight clothing is sometimes just as good if not better. **Additional Information**

## DRESS CODE

Although you will be spending a lot of your time working outdoors it is still important that you adhere to a dress code. Projects are based in traditional Thai communities and therefore you may need to dress more conservatively than you do back home. Long trousers are appropriate for working. You can wear shorts but they should reach the knee. All shirts should cover the shoulders, cleavage, and stomach. T-shirts are fine but vests (tank tops) should be saved for tourist towns. For the construction portion of your trip, shoes should cover the toes but be comfortable such as a work boot or trainer (sneakers). You will want to bring or purchase a pair of flip flops for your free time and whilst in the community. Typical swimming suits are not acceptable for swimming in conservative Thai communities, when you should wear shorts and T-shirts.

As you could also be helping to teach, you should also bring 1 outfit appropriate for teaching: A collared or tailored shirt (polo shirts or button down shirts are appropriate) Trousers or knee-length (or longer) dress/skirt. No T-shirts, tanks/vests or shirts revealing shoulders, stomach or cleavage (make sure that when you raise your arms or bend over you do not show any stomach or cleavage). Nothing see-through or tight. No short shorts, blue jeans, or short skirts.

## BASICS ABOUT THAI CULTURES AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS

The customs of Thailand are very different from what we might be used to in the western world. This section is designed to give you a preview of social customs and culture in Thailand to help better prepare you to easily immerse into the culture of Siam.

The “Wai” - The wai is the greeting used throughout Thailand. Hands are held pressed together in prayer position at your chest and your head bows slightly. If someone wais you, it is always polite to wai them back. You don't have to wai everyone you see on the street but it is a general greeting when meeting someone you know and respect or when being introduced to someone older than you for the first time. The wai is also often used when saying goodbyes or thanking someone.

Head and feet - The head is considered to be a sacred part of the body while the feet are low on the body and considered dirty. Therefore you shouldn't touch someone on the head except in the case of young children. You also shouldn't use your feet to point at things or put them up on tables. Always take your shoes off before entering someone's house or a temple. Some buildings and shops also require you to take your shoes off but you will notice other shoes outside if that is the case.

The Royal Family - The royal family is highly revered throughout Thailand. Thais would never criticize the royal family or their actions. Be careful to be respectful of this and not voice any negativity towards the royal family as it will upset and offend.

Dress and Hygiene - Thais tend to be very clean and like to dress quite neatly when they go out of their house. It is not uncommon for Thais to shower 2 or 3 times a day. As teachers in the community you will be treated with great respect and it is important for you appear neat and clean to fit your role. The weather is often hot and humid so you aren't expected to wear ties or heels. However, you may be working in or visiting conservative rural villages where it is not appropriate to wear sleeveless shirts, shorts, short skirts above the knee, or anything see through. Sandals are fine anytime. If you are swimming in a tourist area, Thais are used to foreigners and it is perfectly acceptable to wear your swimwear. However, if you are swimming in a village or with other Thais, it is common to wear shorts and a T-shirt.

Food - Thai cuisine is internationally known for its pungent flavours, use of fresh herbs and vegetables, and most of all, spicy chilies. Thai food is central to life in Thailand and eating is a part of just about every event. It will certainly be a focus on the expedition as we sample national and regional dishes and learn how to cook traditional Thai-style meals. We'll start you off easy with fried rice and noodles but by the end of your stay you will have the chance to try some wonderful dishes such as banana flower salad, spicy southern curries, and lots of exotic fruits. Hopefully you will return home with a number of Thai recipes to impress your friends and family. Please be open minded and willing to take part in experimenting with strange foods that may end up dazzling your palate.

Language - Thai language is a tonal language. There are 5 tones all together, which means you can say the same word 5 different ways and it may mean 5 different things. Don't get frustrated! It will be helpful to look at some Thai words and phrases before you come. You may not say them correctly but once you hear them spoken a few times, you will get it right. And don't be shy to try out your Thai! Thais love it when foreigners make an effort to learn their language. Even a simple hello (Sawadee kaa (if you're a female)/ Sawadee krap (if you're male) or thank you (kop khun kaa (female)/ kop khun krap (male) is always appreciated.