

THAILAND

SUGGESTED CLOTHING, EQUIPMENT, AND GENERAL INFORMATION

CLIMATE

The Thailand climate ranges from semi-tropical (Chiengmai) to tropical (Bangkok). The climate of the entire country is influenced by the monsoon winds. March, April, and May are normally the hottest months, with temperatures ranging from 80 to 100 degrees F. June through October is the rainy season with torrential rains and temperatures averaging approximately 10 degrees less than the hot season. The "cool" season lasts from November through February with temperatures ranging from 60 degrees to 85 degrees but with occasional cooler days and evenings. (The annual mean is between 80 and 85 degrees.) The relative humidity ranges between 70 and 85% throughout the year. Mildew and insects are a year-round problem.

SUGGESTED CLOTHING FOR MEN

One inexpensive, summer-weight, dark suit and a few pairs of light-weight slacks. Short sleeve, wash & wear dress shirts and a few sport shirts. Shirts and slacks can be made readily in all provinces; good light-weight suits can be made in Bangkok. Prices are very reasonable and the quality is good. A good pair(s) of tennis shoes should be purchased before reaching Thailand. Loafers are the most practical shoes to bring since you will ordinarily remove your shoes before entering homes, temples, etc. Shoes in smaller sizes (up to size 10) can be bought or made in Thailand, and are of good quality. Larger sizes should be brought from the U.S.A. Thai teachers and civil servants wear khaki uniforms. Male PCV teachers are expected to wear slacks, dress shirts, and ties (but no coats) when teaching. The Rural Development PCV on the job will need more khakis; work shoes for those who will be working on construction projects. Proper dress for Thai men includes white (or solid colored) wash & wear shirts, dark slacks, dark socks, and loafers.

SUGGESTED CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

Bring lots of cotton underwear. It will be difficult to find suitable under-clothing in Thailand. Practically everything else (blouses, skirts, dresses) can be made by local dressmakers in Thailand at very reasonable prices. Teachers wear dark (black, brown or blue) skirts and white wash & wear blouses in Thailand. Comfortable low heels for teaching, one or two pair of high heels for special occasions. Flats for everyday wear. Same size rules as for men's shoes.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON CLOTHING

All items of clothing are available in Thailand. Larger sizes can be custom-made by any dressmaker or tailor. Clothing brought to Thailand should be the light-weight wash & wear type of cotton or cotton blend material. Nylon and other synthetics are not recommended because they are uncomfortable in the heat and humidity. Laundry is done by hand. Dry cleaning facilities are available, but expensive. Women do not wear shorts in public; however, slacks and capris are worn. The mode of dress in Thailand is usually modest in color and type. A sweater is a must for the cool season. This is especially true for the North and Northeast. Men might want to bring a windbreaker-type jacket, with a lining, for travel. A sweatshirt may come in handy.

TOILET SUPPLIES

Most toilet items (cosmetics, face soap, toothpaste, tissues, sanitary items, shaving supplies, etc.) are available locally, but at slightly higher prices than in the United States. You may wish to bring an initial supply of personal items, especially if you have preference for a particular brand.

ELECTRIC CURRENT

110 or 220 volts, 50 cycles - the current varies in different localities. Transformers are available in most large provinces. Radios must be fairly powerful to get good reception. Short wave radios are best. Record players and tape recorders are desirable items to bring. Electric irons are available in Thailand at reasonable prices, while an American iron will often require an expensive transformer.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Color film is available but expensive and color developing is very expensive. Black and white film and processing is available everywhere at very reasonable prices.

TIME

12 hours ahead of United States Eastern Standard Time. 10:00 A.M. Monday in Bangkok is 10:00 P.M. Sunday in New York.

CURRENCY

The baht is divided into 100 Satangs and worth about 5 $\frac{1}{2}$; i.e., about 20 baht to the U.S. dollar. The money market operates on a Free Market Exchange.

CUSTOMS DUTY

Your initial shipments to Thailand will be admitted duty-free, provided that the items are obviously for your personal use only. The baggage you bring with you, your air freight, and your surface freight will not be assessed. Other items

shipped from home may be subject to heavy duty. You should caution your friends and relatives not to send presents unless you are willing to pay the duty. Practically everything (even old clothes, cakes and candy) can be subject to heavy duty.

COMMUNICATIONS

Cable and radio service to all parts of the world is reliable. Telephone service to the United States is available. For ordinary letters, airmail stamps cost 5 baht (approximately 30¢) and air letters are 3 baht. International airmail from California takes from 5-6 days. Surface mail takes 6-8 weeks.

(Temporary) Mailing Address: (Name)
c/o Peace Corps Representative
American Embassy
Bangkok, Thailand

DON'TS AND CAUTIONS

Peace Corps Volunteers are not permitted to take pets, weapons, explosives, radio transmitters, automobiles, motorcycles or motor scooters to their overseas assignments. Do not pack in your baggage any flammable material or liquid such as lighter fluid, cleaning solvents, hair spray, insect repellent, aerosol containers, etc. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT SAFETY PRECAUTION.

Volunteers are cautioned not to ship or take high-value items overseas. Jewelry, watches, radios, photography equipment and expensive appliances are subject to loss and breakage, and in many places satisfactory maintenance and repair are not easily accessible. The Peace Corps does not provide paid insurance coverage for personal effects; each Volunteer is responsible for the safekeeping and maintenance of his personal belongings. There is no objection to your taking watches, cameras, and other such items, but you are urged to use judgment in the selection of the articles you take. For example, you may find a \$10.00 or \$12.00 timepiece will give you acceptable service overseas and it will not be necessary to take an expensive watch or one of sentimental value. In the event of loss or breakage, the loss will then be greatly minimized. This same consideration should be given to the selection of clothing, luggage, and other items for your overseas use.

OFFICE OF VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

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