Phuket Travel Safety Guide
Your Guide to Staying Safe in Phuket
Welcome to Phuket!

Phuket is the largest island in Thailand, also known as the Pearl of the Andaman Sea. Millions of visitors are attracted to Phuket every year by the beauty of its nature, vibrant nightlife, hospitable people and unique Thai culture. Phuket is a relatively safe place to visit, however a bit of safety awareness is always recommended to ensure enjoyable journey and memorable holidays.
Phuket Travel Safety Guide

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Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism
Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus
Driving in Phuket can be quite challenging, due to its narrow roads and traffic congestion. Inexperienced drivers are advised not to drive in Phuket. Driving in Thailand is on the left side.

**DRIVING LICENSE**

If you intend to drive, it is recommended to have an international driving permit, especially if your license is not in English. However, in case there is a treaty between the Thai government and your country’s government regarding mutual acceptance of driver’s license, a driving license from your home country might be sufficient.

**PASSPORT**

Do not give your passport as a security deposit when renting a motorbike, car or any other vehicle. Use your documents’ copies or ask for a cash deposit instead. If a cash deposit is not accepted, simply find another rental company. There are plenty of rental places in Phuket.

**CHECK & POINT OUT**

Before renting a motorbike, car or any other vehicle, check and point out any scratches or dents to the rental operator and take photos of damages, to have proof that those damages were not caused by you.
It is your responsibility to have a driving license although the shop might let you rent a bike without asking for your license. If you're stopped by police and can't show them the license, you will be fined.

Road Safety

01
IF RIDING A MOTORBIKE, ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET – PREFERABLY A FULL-FACE ONE

02
ALWAYS FASTEN A SEAT BELT IN A CAR.

03
CHECK YOUR MIRRORS AND DO A SHOULDER CHECK BEFORE CHANGING Lanes.

04
SIGNAL BEFORE TURNING.

05
DRIVE CAREFULLY AND DO NOT SPEED.

06
DO NOT DRIVE IF YOU HAVE DRUNK ALCOHOL.

07
AVOID DRIVING AT NIGHT OR IN RAINY SEASON.
Staying Safe at the Beach

F L A G S & S I G N S

- Patrolled area - the safest swimming area
- Warning - potentially dangerous condition
- Beach closed - do not enter water
- Patrolled beach
- Strong current - Rip current
- No swimming
STAYING SAFE AT THE BEACH

BEACH SAFETY

IN CASE YOU SUNBATE FOR A PROLONGED PERIOD OF TIME, YOU MAY EXPERIENCE SYMPTOMS OF HEAT EXHAUSTION, HEAT STROKE, AND SUNBURN. IF YOU EXPERIENCE FATIGUE, HEADACHE, NAUSEA, FEVER, SKIN REDNESS OR BLISTERING, GET OUT OF THE SUN, DRINK PLENTY OF WATER, AND TAKE A SHOWER. IF YOU DO NOT FEEL BETTER AFTER A SHORT WHILE, SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION.

-1- Apply sunscreen to protect from sunburn and skin cancer.
-2- Obey the swimming safety signs and flags.
-3- Observe the ocean for at least 15 minutes before entering the water.
-4- You can ask the lifeguards about the water conditions.
-5- Swim in the lifeguard-protected area or near a lifeguard.
-6- Pay close attention to children and elderly persons, even when they are in shallow water.
Rip Currents

Rip currents are strong currents moving away from a shore, which can take a swimmer out to the sea. Rip currents happen all year round, especially during the monsoon season (May-October).

The way to stay safe if caught in the rip current is to swim parallel to the beach until out of the current and only then swim to the shore.
Jellyfish can be found in the ocean around Phuket and increasingly inshore during the monsoon season (May-October).

- Do not touch jellyfish washed up on beaches as they are still toxic.
- Wear a stinger suit.
- Avoid swimming at night.
- If you are stung by a jellyfish, relieve the pain with vinegar and remove pieces of tentacles on the skin using gloves or tweezers. Then visit a hospital or a clinic.
- Do not rub, use fresh water or urinate the skin! Those do not help.

**Being stung by a jellyfish can cause the following:** severe pain, swelling, itching, difficulty breathing, or sweating/fever, etc.

**Boating**

- Wear a life jacket.
- Check the weather conditions before boating even you have already booked the trip.
- Do not get on the boat if it does not look well maintained or is overloaded.
- If jet-skiing, be aware of swimmers.
Apply the same precautions as you would in your home country. If you encounter any problems or need help, call the Tourist Police on 1155.

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF FOR NIGHTLIFE

Check the price of drinks before ordering.

Do not accept drinks from strangers.

Do not leave your drink unattended.

Do not get too drunk.

Do not walk alone or take shortcuts at night.

Keep an eye on your wallet.

In case you are have overnight visitors in your room, ask them to leave their ID card at your hotel reception. It is normally required by hotel policies.

Walk far from the roadside if possible and keep your bag on the side of your body away from the road to prevent ride-by bag snatching.

Keep your valuables in your safe deposit box provided by the hotel. Bring only what you need and cash you need for the day.

Keep a phone in a pocket, not in the bag.

Keep your bags secure and wallets out of sight in busy areas.
AVOIDING COMMON SCAMS

IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS OR NEED HELP, CALL THE TOURIST POLICE ON 1155.

TUk TUk RIDES
Riding a Tuk Tuk is one of the experiences many people find unique and exciting in Thailand. To avoid any 'surprises', bargain and agree on the price before the ride. Note the license number and details of tuk tuks (or taxis). Keep your hands, arms, and feet inside the vehicle and hold on to your bags tightly.

PHOTOS WITH LADY BOYS OR ANIMALS
When you take a photo with lady boys or animals, they are likely to charge you, sometimes very aggressively. Avoid taking a photo with them unless you are willing to pay for it. Please be aware that the animals you take a photo with are often drugged and poorly treated. By taking a photograph, you are participating in cruel animal exploitation.

JET SKIS
Select the rental agent carefully and ask the agent whether the jet ski is covered by insurance. Some agents cover damages on their jet skis with paint that can wash off. When you return the jet ski you rented, the rental agent might accuse you of damaging the jet ski and demand you pay for 'the damage you made'.

PHUKET AIRPORT DRIVERS & ACCOMMODATION SCAMS
When you land at Phuket Airport, you will be offered a taxi and suggested accommodation which the drivers might get a commission from. It is recommended to book your accommodation in advance and ask the hotel to arrange airport transfer for you.
GAMBLING
Apart from Thai Government Lottery and betting on horse races, gambling is illegal although gambling dens and online betting can be found throughout the country.
If caught gambling, penalties may include: imprisonment or a fine, or both, depending on the level of offence.

MINIMUM ALCOHOL DRINKING AGE IN THAILAND IS 20 YEARS OLD.

ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES OR VAPORIZERS
Use of electronic cigarettes or vaporizers is not allowed. Penalties for the use include: imprisonment up to 10 years or a fine 5 times the value of the item(s), or both.

DRUGS
Possession, transportation, purchase or sale of any illegal drugs is punishable by law.
Penalties for these offences include: death penalty, imprisonment or a fine, depending on the level of offence.

DRINKING ALCOHOL
Drinking alcohol in the following areas is prohibited:
- Temples or places of worship
- Hospitals, pharmacies
- Public offices
- Education institutions
- Petrol stations
- Public parks
- During driving
Penalties for consuming alcohol in restricted areas include: imprisonment up to 6 months or a fine up to 10,000 THB, or both.
Advertising or displaying names or trademarks of alcoholic beverages, whether directly or indirectly, with a goal of inducing people to drink is also punishable. Penalties for this offence include: a fine up to 500,000 THB or imprisonment up to 1 year, or both.
THAI LAWS THAT TOURISTS SHOULD KNOW

WEARING A SHIRT WHILE DRIVING
Not wearing a shirt while driving is considered an offence.
Penalties for this offence might include:
a fine up to 5,000 THB

WEARING UNDERWEAR
Not wearing beachwear in public.
For example, nude sunbathing on the beach.
Penalties for this offence include:
a fine up to 5,000 THB

DRONES
For information of legal use of drones, go to the Civil Aviation Authority Thailand (CAAT)’s website (https://www.caat.or.th/en/archives/27220) and check whether your drone must be registered. The link also provides rules to apply for permission, rules to fly a drone legally, a registration application form, etc.
Penalties for flying drones without registering might include: imprisonment up to 1 year or a fine up to 40,000 THB, or both.

LITTERING
Spit saliva or phlegm, blow a nose or drop waste in the public outside the place arranged for such a purpose.
If caught littering, penalties include:
a fine up to 2,000 THB
Dropping refuse, waste, waste liquid or other things on the road or waterway.
Penalties for polluting waterways or roads include:
a fine up to 10,000 THB

Carrying Passports
It is advisable for all tourists to carry their identification documents with them at all times. For example, if a police officer asks to see your passport and you do not have it, you might be assumed to have entered the country illegally.

YOU MAY SEE PEOPLE BREAKING THE LAW, INCLUDING THE LOCALS, BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU SHOULD BREAK THE LAW TOO. YOUR ACTION CAN LEAD TO A FINE OR JAIL.
**DO’S & DON’TS IN THAILAND**

01. Treat Buddha images and monks with respect.

02. Dress properly when visiting a temple. Your shoulders and knees should be covered.

03. Take off your shoes when entering a temple. If in doubt, look for the presence of other shoes at the entrance.

04. When the Thai national anthem is played at 8:00 am and 6:00 pm in public places, everyone must stand still to show respect.

05. Speak softly and smile.

06. Women cannot touch or sit next to monks.

07. Do not touch a Thai woman without consent. Despite the image in bars and clubs, most Thai women are quite conservative.
**DO’S & DON’TS IN THAILAND**

08. Do not touch someone on the head. The head is considered sacred.

09. Do not display affection in public. Kissing and cuddling should not be done.

10. Do not sunbathe topless.

11. Do not point with your index finger. It’s considered impolite.

12. Do not place your feet on the table while sitting and do not point anything with feet. Feet are considered unclean. It is very insulting.

13. Do not be upset by personal questions, such as age or marital status. These subjects are used in small-talk. If you do not want to answer, just smile and say it’s a secret.
ILLNESS PREVENTION

**FOOD POISONING**

- CAN BE CAUSED BY EATING CONTAMINATED FOOD OR DRINKING CONTAMINATED WATER.

Symptoms: nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

- Do not drink tap water. Drink bottled water.
- Ice shapes that demonstrate being safe for eating are: cube, tubular and gourmet ice. Other shapes of ice are made for other purposes, which are not clean.
- If you want to try street food, buy food that is freshly cooked.
- Do not eat food that seems too spicy for your usual taste. Tell a restaurant the level of spiciness you are comfortable eating.
- Wash your hands often.

**DENGUE FEVER**

- TRANSMITTED BY MOSQUITO BITES, ESPECIALLY DURING RAINY SEASON.

Symptoms: fever, headache, muscle and joint pain.

- Use mosquito repellent or wear long sleeved shirt and long pants when you go into mosquito-infested areas.
- Close doors and windows of your hotel room at night.

**DEHYDRATION**

- OCCURS WHEN YOUR BODY DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH WATER. HOT WEATHER, SUNBATHING OR DOING AN OUTDOOR ACTIVITY FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME MIGHT CAUSE DEHYDRATION.

Symptoms: feeling thirsty, having dark yellow pee, feeling dizzy or fatigued.

- Drink lots of water.
- Monitor how your body feels. Do not overexert yourself.

**HIV**

- A VIRUS THAT ATTACKS THE BODY IMMUNE SYSTEM. IT IS TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE BODILY FLUIDS OF AN INFECTED PERSON, SUCH AS SEMEN, VAGINAL FLUIDS, BLOOD.

Symptoms: no symptoms until several months or years after contracting the virus.

- Use condoms for any type of sexual encounter.
- Select a tattoo or piercing shop that uses a clean needle and syringe, and never share equipment.
HOSPITALS

For ALL MEDICAL EMERGENCIES call 1669.

In case of an emergency, hospital ambulance or the volunteer ambulance of the Kusoltham Foundation usually brings tourists to the nearest hospital first. Upon initial assistance, tourists are transferred to their preferred hospitals.

All hospitals in Phuket provide a reasonable level of care. Please be aware that it may be difficult to find English speaking staff at the government hospitals.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS

Siriroj International Hospital
Address: 44 Chalermprakiat Ror 9 Rd, Phuket City
Tel: +66 (0)98 024 9400
Website: phuketinternationalhospital.com

Bangkok Hospital Phuket
Address: 2/1 Hongyok utis Rd, Phuket City
Tel: +66 (0)76 254 425,
+66 (0)76 361 000, Emergency: 1719
Website: phukethospital.com

Mission Hospital Phuket
Address: 4/1 Thepkrasattri Rd, Phuket City
Tel: +66 (0)76 237227
Website: missionhospitalphuket.com

Apart from the hospitals, there are many small medical and/or dental clinics and pharmacies around the island.

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS

Patong Hospital
Address: 57 Sainamyen Rd, Patong Beach
Tel: +66 (0)76 342 633 to 4,
Emergency: +66(0)76 340 444
Website: patonghospital.com

Vachira Phuket Hospital
Address: 353 Yaowarat Rd, Phuket Town
Tel: +66 (0)7 636 1234
Website: vachiraphuket.go.th

Phuket Provincial Hospital
Address: 18, 20 Anupatphuketkan Rd, Phuket Town
Tel: +66 (0)76 358 888,
Emergency: 1131
Website: phuketcityhospital.org

Thalang Hospital Phuket
Address: 358 Thepkrasattri Rd, Thalang
Tel: +66 (0)76 311 033 to 4
Website: thalanghospital.go.th
IMPORTANT CONTACTS

THAILAND INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE CODES

The country code for Thailand: 66
Dialing from foreign countries, press 66 then the phone number without zero (0).
Dialing within Thailand, press the phone number with zero (0) leading.

Example (0)76 234 555
Call from foreign countries, press 66 76 234 555
Call in Thailand, press 076 234 555

TOURIST POLICE

CALL 1155 IF YOU NEED ANY HELP OR INFORMATION. TOURIST POLICE LINE IS ACTIVE 24 HRS.

PHUKET IMMIGRATION OFFICES

Phuket Immigration Office, Phuket Town
Operation Hours: Mon-Fri, 8:30-16:30 hrs.
A break for lunch 12:00-13:00 hrs.
(Please go before 15:30 since the office will not process any fee payments after that time.)
Address: 482 Phuket Rd
Tel: +66 (0)76 221 905

Phuket Immigration Office, Patong
Operation Hours: Mon-Fri, 10:00-16:30 hrs.
A break for lunch 12:00-13:00 hrs.
Address: Thaweewong Rd
Tel: +66 (0)76 340 477
WE WISH YOU A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE STAY IN PHUKET!