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GUIDE

YOUR DESTINATION

Everything you need to know about your destination



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STUDY DESTINATION

PHUKET, THAILAND

1. ARRIVAL IN PHUKET, THAILAND

We recommend traveling to Phuket, Thailand at least a few days before the start of the study program, if possible. This will give you a chance to get to know the surroundings and recover from possible jetlag before the beginning of your semester. However, we don't recommend arriving in Phuket too early, especially with a tourist visa. Please let us know if you for some reason are unable to arrive in Phuket in time.

Once you arrive at Phuket International Airport, go through the Immigration and Customs control. Present your passport and other documents when asked to the immigration officers. Please be polite to all the officials at the airport. After the inspection, go to the luggage pick-up area to collect your luggage. There is also a possibility to purchase a local SIM card from the airport, but you can also do it later after being settled to your destination.



There are different options for transport from the airport. Find out more about transportation in Phuket from below.

1.1. Documents you need when arriving

Please have the following document at hand when arriving in Phuket:

- **International Passport** (The passport must be valid for a minimum of six months after arriving in Thailand. A passport with a validity of 18 months is sometimes required when applying for a one-year Multiple Entry Visa. Please note this also when sending Asia Exchange your application for the study abroad program.)
- **Official Acceptance letter**
- **A valid travel and health insurance in English**
- **Thai E-Visa**

1.2. Registering with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

We recommend that all students register their trip at their home country's embassy or Ministry for Foreign Affairs before the start of the study abroad program. Once you have a local cell phone subscription, you can give the number to your local embassy. Most countries offer citizens the possibility of registering online.

Registration includes giving out your personal data, contact information for the duration of your trip and information about your stay abroad to the ministry in case of emergencies or crises.

All independent travelers are advised to register their trips.

2. HOST UNIVERSITY – PRINCE OF SONGKLA UNIVERSITY PHUKET, THAILAND

The campus is located in the middle of Phuket in the district of Kathu.

The area has its own local character and price level, but it is still close to the attractions of the island. PSU is ranked among the top 5 Thai universities.

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Prince of Songkla University (PSU) in Phuket is a public, research-driven university founded in 1967. It was the first university in Southern Thailand, harnessed to raise the region’s general education standards and support regional industry and development. Today, PSU is a modern and highly international university that takes pride in its origins as a patron of the local culture, education and environment.

Study tourism and economics at PSU one of Thailand’s top 5 universities. You will study in an international study program that receives excellent student feedback year after year. Live on a paradise island that is much more than just beautiful beaches and learn more about Asian people, cultures, habits and traditions.

PSU in a nutshell:

- Established in 1967 as the 1st university in southern Thailand.
- One of the 9 research universities in Thailand.
- Comprises 30 faculties, two hospitals, and more than 40 excellence and research centers.
- 50% of the lecturers hold doctorate degrees.
- Regularly ranked among top 5 universities in Thailand.
- Ranked several times 1st in Thailand and 2nd in Southeast Asia by Webometrics.
- Scored 4.65 out of 5 in the national quality assessment administered by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment of Thailand - the highest among Thai State universities.



3. WORKING IN PHUKET

You are not allowed to work in Phuket with either a tourist or student visa. Phuket has very strict rules regarding employing foreign nationals because they try to prevent foreigners from taking up positions that can be filled by a native.

4. CONTACTS

The main contact person for you is Mr. Colin Gallagher. Colin is an English teacher at PSU and a real British gentleman from London. He is happy to help you with everything during your stay in Phuket.

Email: colingallagher2010@gmail.com

Tel. +66 8747 135 42

5. MONEY

You will need cash in Phuket as the opportunities to pay with a credit card can be limited. You should exchange a small amount of Baht already in your home country, e.g. for the taxi at the airport.

We recommend exchanging some of your national currency into Baht before leaving home, so that you'll have some cash with you when you arrive. The most affordable way of buying Baht is bringing some cash in your national currency with you and exchanging it at a currency exchange at the study location. Remember to compare the exchange rates first and be attentive during the actual exchange. Some unofficial currency exchange offices may offer good exchange rates, but there is a bigger risk of being cheated.

We recommend taking at least a VISA Electron and/or a credit card with you. Don't wait until you're all out of cash to withdraw more money, because sometimes you may face technical difficulties when using the ATMs. Withdrawing cash with foreign credit or debit card usually costs approximately 3 EUR + 2.5 % of the sum you are withdrawing.

Usually exchange students are not opening up a Thai bank account for the study abroad period. Bank account in student's home country has been enough.

5.1. Cash withdrawing money, and credit cards

- The baht is the official currency of Thailand. It is divided into 100 satang. Prior to decimalization, the baht was divided into eight feuang, each of eight att. The issuance of currency is the responsibility of the Bank of Thailand. Cash may be the only form of payment in smaller towns and rural areas but many places will take alternatively US dollars, giving change in colones.
- ATMs are common throughout the cities and small towns. They will usually accept foreign cards but in some regions, only Visa cards are accepted.
- Banking hours: State banks are open from Monday to Friday from 9 am to 3 pm. Private banks are open from Monday to Friday from 8 am to 4 pm.
- MasterCard and Visa credit cards are all accepted; American Express slightly less so. Many banks will only process MasterCard for cash credits. Occasionally, paying with credit cards may not be possible for technical reasons.

5.2. Tipping

Tipping in Thailand is not mandatory, but you can always leave a few extra baht if the service exceeds expectations. In restaurants, a 10 percent service charge will be included on the final bill and is considered a sufficient tip. With taxi drivers, depending on the quality of their service it's kind to show your appreciation by rounding up the total sum or let the driver "keep the change".

5.3. Bargaining

Like all over Asia, bargaining is a common habit also in Thailand. At first, it might feel stressful but you will get used to it.

We recommend you start communicating in Thai as soon as possible. Already a few words show respect towards the locals and their culture. People will give you better service and lower prices for sure. Bargaining can be even a pleasant experience for you and also for the seller.

6. PHONE CALL AND CELL PHONE SUBSCRIPTION

Getting a Thai SIM card

As you arrive in Phuket, you're advised to get a local pre-paid SIM card from e.g. a 7eleven store. The most popular connections are "Happy", "1-2-Call" and "True". A

local cell phone subscription is the most affordable way of making calls in Thailand as well as staying in touch with your friends and family back home (apart from making calls with Skype, which can be free of charge). You can get a monthly internet connection with your prepaid for about 10 euros /month.

Different data packages for internet use are readily available; the prices and registration processes vary a little and you should consider a few different possibilities based on your individual needs.

“Line” is a popular phone app widely used in Thailand. The main idea is similar to Whatsapp: calls and texts through Line are free.

Internet and cell phone coverage

Free wi-fi is very common in Thailand, especially in the city area and tourist destinations. However, the connection is not always the best. On the campus, there is free wi-fi available for the students.

When traveling, it is good to keep in mind that there are places in Thailand with no internet and cell phone coverage.

International calls

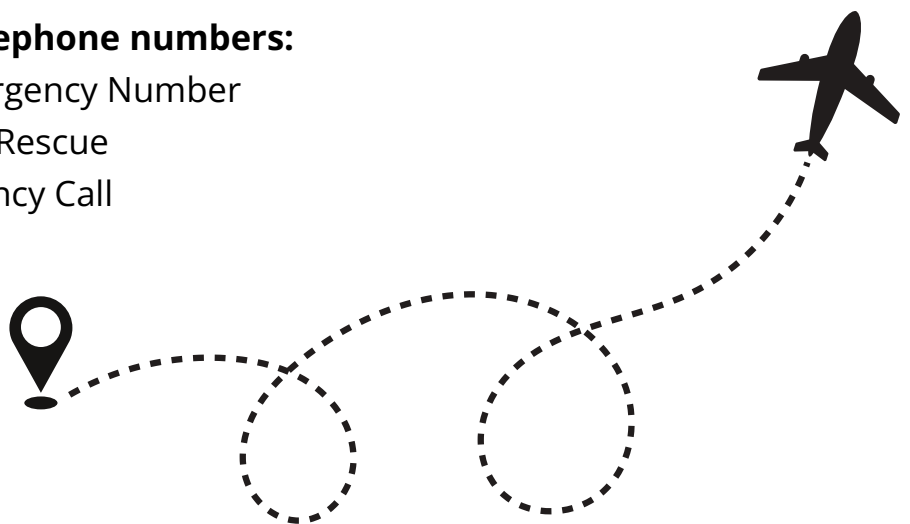
Calling from your home country to your local Thai number

E.g. from Finland it is possible to call to a Thai number with less than 10 cents per minute with using a discount code. Companies in Finland offering discount calls are e.g. **Call99577** and **TeleAle** .For making the discount calls with your friends and family need to dial the discount code + country code + your Thai number (e.g. 99577 66 12345678).

The discount codes are usually not valid when sending text messages.

Thailand Emergency telephone numbers:

- 191 Police / Main Emergency Number
- 1554 Ambulance and Rescue
- 1669 Medical Emergency Call



7. TRANSPORTATION IN PHUKET, THAILAND

The traffic culture in Thailand, as well as in other parts of Asia, may be very hectic compared to the traffic culture of your home country. There doesn't appear to be any traffic regulations, or at least people don't seem to abide by them. However, despite all this, the traffic seems to flow according to its own rules. Phuket luckily is much easier than e.g. Bangkok in Thailand.

Taxis

Taxis and transport are arranged by local tourism companies. Other ways of getting around are the local buses and tuk-tuks.

Visitors can call 076 232157-8 to get a metered taxi that will take them anywhere in Phuket. The metered fare will include a 100 BHT surcharge.

Tuk-tuks can be used for travel between the beaches and Phuket Town or between different beaches.

Renting a Scooter

Lowest price shouldn't be your priority when looking for a scooter to rent. Pay attention to the condition of the scooter and the reliability and quality of the renter's service.

Remember to check the condition of the brakes and prefer newer bikes. We recommend you also to ensure the scooter insurance is included in the rental price.

The typical daily rent for a scooter in Kathu is 150-250 THB. You get discount when signing a monthly rental agreement (starting from 2,500 THB).

7.1. Making your way to the airport

Getting to Phuket International Airport can be straightforward. Here are some options depending on your starting point:

1. **Taxi:** The most convenient way. Just book a taxi or use a ride-hailing app. Make sure the driver knows you're headed to the airport.
2. **Airport Shuttle:** Many hotels offer shuttle services. Check with your accommodation to see if they provide this option.

1. **Public Bus:** If you're on a budget, local buses run from popular areas like Patong and Phuket Town to the airport. They can be slower, but they're affordable.
2. **Car Rental:** If you prefer to drive, several car rental companies operate in Phuket. Just follow the signs to the airport.
3. **Private Transfer:** You can also arrange for a private transfer through various services online, which can be a comfortable and stress-free option.

Make sure to allow plenty of time for your journey, especially if you're traveling during peak hours. Safe travels!



YOUR WAY ABROAD

The world has an interesting way of giving great experiences
to the ones who are passionate about their dreams.

Miia Muukkonen, Asia Exchange student

