

COVID-19 related Frequently Asked Questions

We know that travelling will temporarily be different. We are also aware that both tour operators and their clients need more information on life in the destinations. This document is a compilation of questions received and will hopefully be of help in planning a trip to Thailand.

Table Of Contents (click on a subject to advance to the chapter)

COVID-19 related Frequently Asked Questions	1
FAQ – Asia Pacific	2
Is it safe to travel to Asia?	2
How Tour East ensure the safety of guests?	2
Where can I find the latest travel update?.....	2
When will it be safe to travel to Asia Pacific destinations?.....	2
What is required for my travel?	2
FAQ – Thailand.....	3
What is the situation relating to Covid-19 infections?.....	3
Is Thailand ready to welcome tourists?.....	3
When is Thailand ready to open its borders?	3
Can people travel within the country without problems?	3
Is physical distancing necessary?	4
Are face masks necessary?	4
Do face masks really help to protect?	4
Physical distancing, face masks – what else do I have to do?.....	4
This sounds like a lot of trouble. Is this so strict?.....	4
QR code on my mobile? Do I need loads of roaming? That’s expensive!	5
Are all businesses open?	5
Can I visit temples and other popular sites?	5
How do I fly inside Thailand?.....	5
What if I cannot or don’t want to have this app?	5
Do restaurants enforce physical distancing?.....	5
Am I going to be safe if I travel to Thailand?.....	6
What if I am in a shop and don’t feel safe?.....	6
What if I get sick or feel unwell?	6

FAQ – Asia Pacific

Is it safe to travel to Asia?

Countries throughout the region have early on adopted physical distancing and the wearing of face mask. Governments acted swiftly to curb the spread of COVID-19 infections. Even though an increasing number of these countries have not seen local infections for periods exceeding a month, all countries remain vigilant and keep preventive measures in place.

The protocol implemented in most countries is rather strict and would, therefore, guarantee the best possible health and safety.

How Tour East ensure the safety of guests?

JTB APAC/Tour East has established Standard Operating Procedures relating to health, hygiene and safety. These incorporate recommendations by the WTTC and shall ensure the utmost comfort and safety of our clients and team members. We also require our suppliers – from providers of accommodation, transportation, restaurants, tours and to sites and venues – to follow a strict protocol.

Where can I find the latest travel update?

JTB APAC/Tour East branches are continually updating the latest status, and we publish the updates on our website <https://www.toureast.net/country-specific-covid-19-updates-on-tourism/> as well as in newsletters.

When will it be safe to travel to Asia Pacific destinations?

See our answer to “Is it safe to travel to Asia?” above.

An increasing number of countries have only seen new infections with people who returned from abroad – these had been quarantined on arrival. All nations in the APAC region have been hesitant to open their borders in order to ensure that the region both recovers but also a safe place to live and visit.

What is required for my travel?

At present, none of the countries has opened their borders and stipulated the requirements towards visitors from abroad. We shall provide updated information on documentation required on the individual FAQ pages of each country.

FAQ – Thailand

What is the situation relating to Covid-19 infections?

Thailand has not registered a single local infection in over a month (status end of June). The only new infections have been people returning to Thailand from abroad and tested positive whilst in quarantine.

Is Thailand ready to welcome tourists?

Thailand's borders were opening 1st July to selected groups of foreigners.

Authorities had already permitted experts and foreigners with Thai work permits to enter Thailand from 1st July. Additional groups of foreigners permitted to enter Thailand have since continuously been added. The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) furthermore has the implementation of new regulations for international flights. It requires that all passengers must have a medical certificate before booking the ticket.

1. Foreign spouses and children of work permit holders.
2. Foreigners with residency rights in Thailand.
3. Foreigners married to Thais.
4. Foreigners and their carers seeking medical treatment in Thailand (except for Covid-19).
5. International students and their guardians.
6. Short-stay business travellers and guests of the government from Japan, South Korea, Singapore, China and Hong Kong – as per special arrangements made with these countries.
7. Foreigners who hold a residential permit as well as their spouse and children
8. Foreigners who hold a work permit and their spouse and children, as well as migrant workers who hold official documents allowing them to stay and work in Thailand
9. Foreigners granted entry under special agreements, such as Thailand Elite cardholders.

These groups are required to follow the Public Health Ministry's measures strictly and spend 14 days at an alternative state quarantine site.

Inbound Travellers, even those working in the Diplomatic Corps, will have to subject themselves to quarantine.

Visitors will be tested for Covid-19 prior to travel and on arrival in Thailand, where they will be monitored constantly by health and security officials. They must submit their Thailand itinerary in advance and will only be allowed to travel by private car.

Foreigners with work permit (WP3) and/or BOI certificate holders should contact their local Royal Thai Embassy or consulate for a permit to travel to Thailand. The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) will arrange seats aboard repatriation flights for eligible passengers.

When is Thailand ready to open its borders?

It is expected that this won't happen before September or even October 2020.

Can people travel within the country without problems?

Travelling inside the countries has not been restricted since the middle of May 2020. However, physical distance and the wearing of a face mask are strictly observed

- Most of the country's airports are open. However, there is presently a limited number of flights available as a few airlines have chosen to resume operations later.
- The State Railway of Thailand has resumed operations. Train services throughout Thailand are now available.
- Bus services inside cities and between destinations have resumed.
- Skytrain and MRT have been operating in Bangkok.
- Public transportation, including taxis, inside the destinations, are available without restrictions, others than those mentioned above.

With the country remains closed to foreign tourism, domestic tourism is heavily promoted and has been increasingly successful, with typical weekend destinations like Hua Hin recording fully-booked situations over weekends and public holidays. People living in Thailand have been travelling!

To ensure that you and/or your clients experience transportation in an utmost hygienic and safe environment, please contact Tour East Thailand.

Is physical distancing necessary?

Physical distancing has to be assured in all public places and transportation, restaurants, shops, shopping malls, gym, etc. The same goes for elevators, where the maximum capacity is reduced, and passengers are asked to refrain from speaking.

Are face masks necessary?

Yes, the wearing of face masks is necessary when in public and public transportation and shops.

Do face masks really help to protect?

Countries throughout Asia have been adopting face masks for quite a while. While many citizens of big Asian cities wear them to protect themselves from air pollution, the wearing of face masks is also very common for people who have a cold or feel otherwise unwell. This polite gesture is less about protecting oneself – it's more "with my mask, I may protect you".

Physical distancing, face masks – what else do I have to do?

Not really a lot. Before entering a building, public transportation or a shop, people are having their body temperature tested. They will furthermore be asked to check-in to the Thai Chana site – by way of reading a QR code. They are then asked to read the code again on leaving – this time, they will have to use the Thai Chana's *check out* function. Some establishments put a little colourful sticker onto the dress of the check-in customer. This is to confirm that the particular person has been checked and allowed entry.

This sounds like a lot of trouble. Is this so strict?

It sounds like a lot of bother and may not appeal to some westerners in the beginning. However, Thailand has been very successful in keeping infections under control, and this only worked with the participation of its people who followed the rules. The country has – with the exception of Phuket – never been in a complete lockdown. Companies are checked – not the least via Thai Chana's *check out* function if they comply with the rules. And nobody really wants to create further or new problems, does one? Thus, a bit of extra work sounds reasonable if we wish a life close to the former normal.

QR code on my mobile? Do I need loads of roaming? That's expensive!

Worry not. For those who don't have a mobile device that can read QR code and connect to the Thai Chana site, they can leave their contact details at the entrance – and would have to log their departure time when they exit. Also, public areas do have wi-fi and would so enable you to take part in the Thai Chana site tracing.

Are all businesses open?

Most business and business types are allowed to operate, albeit under rules that are to be strictly observed.

Can I visit temples and other popular sites?

More and more sites are open and ready to welcome visitors under the new protocol, with physical distancing. By the time foreign visitors are welcomed back, all the popular and not so popular sites will be ready to for safe and healthy visits.

Tour East branches maintain a log on our Agent Portal where we record all accommodation, excursions/activities and sites that are in operation (or information on dates when any of these will resume operation)

How do I fly inside Thailand?

Flying is not much different from the pre-COVID-19 times. Physical distancing is required in all public areas and face masks are to be work at all times.

Boarding and disembarkation of the aircraft is done by zone. It helps to be at the gate in time.

Aside from the Thai Chana site that facilitates the checking in and out of buildings and businesses, there is one every passenger needs to download: the AOT app. AOT is the Airport Authority of Thailand.

Passengers are required to register, upload a picture of the ID card (Thai Nationals) or passport, provide details on their upcoming flight and so generate a "consent screen/form" which is to be presented to the officer at the entrance to the departure hall.

What if I cannot or don't want to have this app?

Similar to Thai Chana check-ins, the AOT offer a good old analogue – paper version. Passengers will have to fill in a form providing all information that the app collects, too. The form will then have to be handed to the officers before being granted access to the departure area.

Do restaurants enforce physical distancing?

The answer is Yes. All businesses are to observe rules of physical distancing, temperature checks as well as checking in and out.

Restaurants still ensure that there is 1.5m distance between individual diners, a plastic or plexiglass partition between two diners sharing a table. In most restaurants, there will be stickers on seats and table indicating that this seat is to be left vacant. Some restaurants even put large teddy bears into seats that should not be occupied.

In reality, many outlets have also shown "sense" and allow groups that know each other and are usually close (e.g. families, couples, friends, etc.) dine together. However, some restaurants that are in malls may take a more careful approach, as the operators of the mall may have very strict rules and penalties.

Am I going to be safe if I travel to Thailand?

If you follow protocol (e.g. keep physical distance, wear face masks, wash your hands frequently, etc.) you are as safe as you can be. Choose restaurants and shops that clearly show that they are on top of health and hygiene standards. Thailand has implemented what is called the Safety and Health Administration (SHA) standards. Travel agencies, transportation companies, hotels, restaurants, other businesses, even temples and the famous Grand Palace have applied and gone through rigorous certification work. Look out for businesses that show the SHA certificate and you can be even more assured that you are in hygienic and healthy hands (with physical distancing in our mind, we used a figure of speech here).

Having said all that, Tour East Thailand have submitted their documentation and expect to be SHA certified shortly.

What if I am in a shop and don't feel safe?

Thailand strives to keep its citizens and visitors healthy and safe. Maintaining a virus-free and a healthy country requires a combined effort of everyone.

In the event that there's an area or experience that causes discomfort, everyone is asked to provide information. The check-out feature on Thai Chana offers a rating – this, however, may not suit everyone, especially a visitor. In such cases, visitors are advised to inform the guide, the hotel concierge or Tour East's customer service line – with details (with the name of service, the shop/area) of the experience. The comment will be escalated to the authorities who will look into the matter and assure better experience for future visitors

What if I get sick or feel unwell?

Being sick, feeling under the weather or experiencing a few intestinal urges is not uncommon. You are perfect hands, for Thailand's health infrastructure is one of South East Asia's best. Every destination has hospitals of international standard.

Your welcome information includes information on hospitals near your accommodation. The Tour East Thailand team will be happy to provide assistance. Alternatively, the concierge in your hotel can be of assistance.