

Thailand Relocation Blueprint

Your Complete Moving Checklist
& 12-Week Timeline

2025 Edition

Brought to you by Thailand Path

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How to Use This Guide

Print this PDF and check off items as you complete them. Follow the 12-week timeline for a stress-free move to Thailand. Keep it on your phone for quick reference during your first weeks.

Quick Start

1. Read through the full timeline (pages 3-6) to understand the process.
2. Use the Document Checklist (pages 7-8) to gather everything you need.
3. Review the Financial Worksheet (page 9) to budget your move.
4. Pack using the checklist on page 12.
5. Follow the day-by-day guide for your first week (pages 13-14).

12-Week Moving Timeline

Follow this timeline to ensure a smooth relocation. Adjust dates based on your actual departure. Check off each item as you complete it.

Phase 1: Research & Decision

Weeks 12-10

- Research visa options (Tourist, Non-B, Non-O, DTV, LTR, Elite) and requirements
- Research cities and neighborhoods (Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, etc.)
- Start building a relocation budget and emergency fund
- Book consultation with tax advisor if you have significant assets
- Join Thailand expat Facebook groups and forums
- Research cost of living in your target city

Tip: Visa First

Your visa type determines everything else — required funds, documents, and timeline. Research visa options thoroughly before making other plans.

Phase 2: Visa & Documents

Weeks 10-8

- Apply for your chosen visa (processing takes 2-4 weeks for many types)
- Ensure passport is valid for at least 18 months from departure
- Gather required documents: bank statements, background check, medical certificate
- Request criminal background check from home country (can take 4-8 weeks)
- Get passport photos taken (8-10 copies, Thai visa photo size)
- Book flights — aim for low season (Apr-Oct) for better rates
- Research health insurance options for Thailand

Tip: Document Copies

Make digital copies of ALL documents and store them in cloud storage. Also print physical copies and keep them in a waterproof folder.

Phase 3: Financial Setup

Weeks 8-6

- Open an international bank account or set up a Wise account
- Notify your home bank of your relocation and travel dates
- Set up online banking and mobile banking apps
- Transfer funds to meet visa financial requirements (if applicable)
- Apply for a credit card with no foreign transaction fees
- Budget for first 3 months of living expenses in Thailand
- Set up automatic bill payments for any ongoing home-country obligations

Tip: The 800K / 500K Rule

Retirement visas require 800,000 THB in a Thai bank. DTV requires 500,000 THB. Plan your transfers early — international transfers can take 3-5 business days.

Phase 4: Housing & Practical

Weeks 6-4

- Research neighborhoods in your chosen city (walkability, transit, amenities)
- Book temporary accommodation for first 2-4 weeks (hotel or serviced apartment)
- Arrange international shipping if needed (or plan to buy locally)
- Sell, donate, or store belongings in home country
- Get a medical check-up and update vaccinations
- Research phone plans and confirm your phone is unlocked for Thai SIM
- Set up a VPN service if you need access to home-country streaming/services

Phase 5: Final Preparations

Weeks 4-2

- Purchase comprehensive health insurance for Thailand
- Begin packing — reference the Packing Checklist on page 12
- Set up mail forwarding with your home country postal service
- Cancel or reduce home country subscriptions (gym, streaming, etc.)
- Download essential apps: Grab, Google Translate, LINE, Wise
- Make certified copies of all important documents
- Arrange travel insurance to cover the period before health insurance activates
- Notify your country's embassy if registering as a resident abroad

Tip: Essential Apps

Download Grab (Thai Uber), LINE (messaging standard), Google Translate (Thai offline pack), and Wise before departure. You'll need them on day one.

Phase 6: Departure Week

Week 1

- Confirm temporary accommodation booking and address
- Print all visa documents, hotel bookings, and financial proof
- Exchange some currency to THB or arrange airport pickup service
- Complete final packing — weigh all luggage to avoid overage fees
- Charge all devices and download offline maps of your destination city
- Inform a trusted contact of your flight details and arrival plans
- Do a final walkthrough of your home — check all drawers, safe, mail

Document Checklist

Gather these documents before departure. Check each item off as you obtain it. Keep originals in your carry-on bag — never in checked luggage.

Identity & Legal

- Passport (valid for 18+ months from arrival date)
- Visa approval letter or e-Visa printout
- Birth certificate (certified copy)
- Marriage certificate (if applicable)
- Medical certificate (if required for visa type)
- Criminal background check (apostilled/legalized if needed)

Financial Documents

- Bank statements (last 3-6 months, stamped by bank)
- Proof of income or employment letter
- Visa financial requirement proof (800K/500K THB bank letter)
- International credit cards (at least 2 different cards)
- Debit cards with low foreign withdrawal fees
- Wise or other transfer service account (set up and verified)

Document Checklist (continued)

Insurance Documents

- Health insurance policy (printed and digital copy)
- Travel insurance policy (temporary, until health insurance activates)
- Insurance provider contact card (keep in wallet and phone)
- Emergency evacuation coverage details (if applicable)

Housing Documents

- Rental contract or hotel booking confirmation
- Landlord or agent contact information
- Condo amenities list and building rules
- Previous rental references (helpful for long-term leases)

Other Important Documents

- Passport photos (8-10 copies — 4x6cm, white background)
- International driving permit (valid for 1 year)
- Medical records and vaccination card
- Prescription documentation for any medications
- Pet health certificates and vaccination records (if bringing pets)
- Educational credentials (degrees, certificates — certified copies)

Important: Document Storage

Create a digital folder on your phone and in cloud storage (Google Drive, Dropbox) with scans of every document. Also email copies to yourself. Thailand immigration often asks for printed copies.

Financial Preparation Worksheet

Monthly Budget Overview

| Item | Amount (THB) | Amount (USD) | Notes |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Monthly income | _____ | _____ | Salary, pension, remote work |
| Savings target (3-6 mo) | _____ | _____ | Emergency fund |
| Visa financial requirement | 500,000 / 800,000 | \$14,000 / \$22,800 | DTV / Retirement |
| International transfer fees | 500-2,000 | \$15-57 | Per transfer, Wise is cheapest |
| First month budget | See below | See below | Varies by city |

First Month Budget Estimate by City

| City | Budget Range (THB) | Budget Range (USD) | Lifestyle |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Bangkok | 35,000 - 60,000 | \$1,000 - \$1,700 | Comfortable |
| Chiang Mai | 20,000 - 35,000 | \$570 - \$1,000 | Very Comfortable |
| Phuket | 40,000 - 70,000 | \$1,140 - \$2,000 | Comfortable |
| Koh Samui | 30,000 - 55,000 | \$860 - \$1,570 | Comfortable |
| Krabi | 20,000 - 30,000 | \$570 - \$860 | Very Comfortable |
| Pattaya | 25,000 - 45,000 | \$710 - \$1,280 | Comfortable |

Sample Monthly Expenses (Bangkok, Comfortable)

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Rent (1BR condo, central) | 12,000 - 20,000 THB |
| Utilities (electric, water, internet) | 2,500 - 4,000 THB |
| Food (mix of street food & restaurants) | 8,000 - 15,000 THB |
| Transportation (BTS/MRT + Grab) | 2,000 - 4,000 THB |
| Health insurance | 1,500 - 4,000 THB |
| Phone plan | 300 - 800 THB |
| Entertainment & gym | 3,000 - 8,000 THB |
| Miscellaneous | 2,000 - 5,000 THB |

Housing Quick Reference

Short-Term Options (First 2-4 Weeks)

| Option | Price Range | Best For | Book Via |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Hotels | 1,000 - 3,000 THB/night | 1-3 days | Agoda, Booking.com |
| Serviced Apartments | 15,000 - 30,000 THB/month | 2-4 weeks | Direct, Agoda |
| Airbnb | 20,000 - 50,000 THB/month | 2-8 weeks | Airbnb |
| Hostels (private room) | 500 - 1,500 THB/night | Budget, 1-2 weeks | Hostelworld |

Long-Term Options (1+ Months)

| Option | Price Range | Typical Lease | Notes |
|--------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Condo rental | 5,000 - 30,000 THB/mo | 6-12 months | Most popular for expats |
| House rental | 10,000 - 40,000 THB/mo | 12 months | Better for families |
| Townhouse | 8,000 - 25,000 THB/mo | 12 months | Local style, more space |

Key Tips

Always book 2-4 weeks of short-term accommodation first — never sign a long-term lease sight unseen. Inspect properties in person before signing. Check water pressure, AC, internet speed, and noise levels. Negotiate annual leases for 10-20% discount off monthly rate. Pay 1 month deposit + 1 month advance is standard. Use a Thai speaker or agent to negotiate — landlords often quote higher prices to foreigners. Popular expat areas: Bangkok (Sukhumvit, Silom, Thong Lo), Chiang Mai (Nimman, Old City), Phuket (Kata, Kamala).

Warning: Common Scams

Never pay deposits via wire transfer before arriving. Never sign a contract without seeing the unit. If a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is. Use reputable agents and always get a receipt.

Health & Insurance

Recommended Vaccinations

| Vaccination | Recommended For | Timing | Notes |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Hepatitis A | Everyone | 2 weeks before travel | Highly recommended |
| Hepatitis B | Everyone | 6 months before (3 doses) | Long-term stay essential |
| Typhoid | Everyone | 2 weeks before travel | Food/waterborne risk |
| Tetanus | Everyone | Check booster status | Every 10 years |
| Japanese Encephalitis | Rural/northern areas | 1 month before (2 doses) | Chiang Mai region |
| Rabies | Optional (animal contact) | 4 weeks before (3 doses) | Many street dogs/cats |

Health Insurance Comparison

| Plan Type | Annual Cost (THB) | Coverage | Best For |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Local Thai Plan | 15,000 - 50,000 | Thailand only | Budget-conscious expats |
| International Plan | 50,000 - 200,000 | Worldwide | Frequent travelers |
| Inpatient Only | 10,000 - 30,000 | Hospital/surgery | Basic coverage |
| Comprehensive | 40,000 - 150,000 | Full coverage | Complete peace of mind |

Important Emergency Numbers

- 1669** National Emergency Medical (ambulance)
- 1155** Tourist Police (English speaking, 24/7)
- 191** Royal Thai Police
- 199** Fire Department
- 1178** Immigration Hotline

Tip: Hospital Readiness

Save the nearest hospital's direct ER number in your phone. Bangkok Hospital, Bumrungrad, and Samitivej have English-speaking staff. In Chiang Mai, Bangkok Hospital Chiang Mai and Lanna Hospital are good options.

What to Pack

Thailand has almost everything available locally, often cheaper. Focus on essentials and hard-to-find items. Check each item as you pack it.

Documents & Money

- Essential documents folder (waterproof — keep in carry-on)
- Debit/credit cards (2+ cards, preferably no foreign transaction fees)
- Some cash in THB (5,000-10,000 for first few days)
- Emergency cash in USD or EUR (hidden, separate from wallet)

Clothing & Weather

- Lightweight breathable clothing (cotton/linen)
- Rain jacket or compact umbrella (May-October is rainy season)
- Air purifier mask (for burning season if going north, Feb-Apr)
- One smart-casual outfit (for visa appointments, nice restaurants)
- Comfortable walking sandals and closed shoes
- Light sweater (AC in malls and cinemas is very cold)

Electronics

- Unlocked smartphone (for Thai SIM card — essential)
- Laptop with surge protector power strip
- Universal power adapter (Thailand uses Type A, B, C, O plugs)
- Power bank (10,000mAh+ for travel days)
- External hard drive with backup of important files

Health & Toiletries

- Prescription medications (3-month supply + written prescriptions)
- Over-the-counter basics (pain relief, anti-diarrhea, antihistamines)
- Sunscreen SPF 50+ (expensive in Thailand — bring a bottle)
- Insect repellent (DEET-based, for first weeks)
- Minimal toiletries (everything is available and cheap in Thailand)

Tip: Don't Overpack

Thailand has excellent and affordable shopping. 7-Eleven is everywhere for basics. Clothing is cheap at markets. Pack light and buy what you need locally. Most expats say they packed too much.

First Week in Thailand

Your first week sets the tone for your new life. Follow this day-by-day guide to get settled quickly and handle essential setup tasks.

Day 1 — Arrival

- Clear immigration (have visa docs, hotel booking, and return/onward ticket ready)
- Get a Thai SIM card at the airport (AIS, DTAC, or True — tourist plans from 500 THB)
- Take airport transfer to your accommodation (Grab app or pre-booked taxi)
- Check in and confirm TM30 registration (your landlord/hotel must file this)
- Get cash from ATM (note: most ATMs charge 200-220 THB foreign card fee)
- Explore your immediate neighborhood on foot — find nearest 7-Eleven

Day 2 — Explore Your Area

- Walk around your neighborhood — find nearest market, pharmacy, and hospital
- Download essential apps if not done already: Grab, LINE, Google Translate
- Find a local restaurant and try some Thai food — ask for 'mai phet' (not spicy) if needed
- Locate nearest BTS/MRT station or understand local transport options
- Set up your Thai SIM with a data plan (if tourist SIM, consider monthly plan)

Day 3 — Official Business

- Visit local Immigration office — confirm reporting requirements for your visa type
- Open a Thai bank account (Bangkok Bank and Kasikorn are most expat-friendly)
- Get bank letter confirming account for visa requirements if applicable
- Take photos of your passport, visa page, and TM30 — keep on your phone

First Week in Thailand (continued)

Day 4 — Housing Hunt

- If in temporary accommodation, start viewing long-term housing options
- Visit potential condos/apartments — check AC, water pressure, internet, noise
- Explore different neighborhoods to find your preferred area
- Talk to other expats about their housing recommendations
- Take notes on each property you visit (address, rent, pros, cons)

Day 5 — Home Setup

- Set up home internet (AIS, True, or 3BB — installation takes 1-3 days)
- Buy household essentials (bedding, towels, kitchen basics at Big C or Lotus's)
- Get a motorbike taxi or tuk-tuk ride to learn your local routes
- Set up recurring transfer in Wise if receiving income from abroad

Day 6 — Health & Community

- Find a local doctor or hospital — register if your insurance requires it
- Locate the nearest dental clinic for future reference
- Explore coworking spaces (if remote worker) — many offer day passes
- Join local Facebook expat groups for your city
- Find a local gym, pool, or park for exercise

Day 7 — Settle In

- Rest and explore at a relaxed pace
- Try a local market and buy fresh fruit and prepared food
- Set up 90-day reporting calendar reminder (required for most long-stay visas)
- Start learning basic Thai phrases: sawatdee (hello), khop khun (thank you)
- Reflect on your first week and adjust plans as needed
- Celebrate — you made it to Thailand!

First Month Setup

These tasks should be completed within your first month. They'll ensure you're fully set up and compliant with Thai regulations.

Immigration & Legal

- Complete visa extension or conversion at Immigration (if needed)
- File 90-day report or set reminder for due date
- Register your current address with Immigration (TM30 confirmation)
- Register with your home country's embassy in Thailand

Housing & Utilities

- Sign long-term lease agreement (get Thai and English copy)
- Transfer utility accounts to your name (electric, water)
- Set up internet connection at home (if not done in week 1)
- Set up recurring rent payments (bank transfer is standard)

Financial

- Complete Thai bank account setup (mobile banking app, ATM card received)
- Set up automatic transfers for rent and regular bills
- Confirm health insurance is active and keep policy number handy
- Track your actual spending vs. budget — adjust as needed

Transportation

- Get a Thai driving license (requires residency certificate from Immigration)
- Register/motorbike if buying one (needs residence certificate + visa)
- Learn local bus routes and BTS/MRT lines for daily commuting
- Download Google Maps offline areas for your regular routes

Lifestyle & Community

- Find your regular: dentist, doctor, gym, fresh market, favorite restaurants
- Join local Facebook expat groups for your specific city/neighborhood
- Start Thai language basics (Duolingo, local class, or private tutor)
- Establish a routine: work schedule, exercise, social activities
- Explore nearby attractions and plan weekend trips

Emergency Contacts & Resources

Emergency Numbers

| Service | Number | Notes |
|-------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Medical Emergency / Ambulance | 1669 | National, 24/7 |
| Tourist Police (English) | 1155 | 24/7, most helpful for foreigners |
| Royal Thai Police | 191 | General police emergency |
| Fire Department | 199 | Emergency fire services |
| Immigration Hotline | 1178 | Visa and immigration questions |

Your Embassy Information

Country: _____
Embassy Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Emergency After-Hours: _____

Useful Websites

Thailand Path

thailandpath.com — Comprehensive relocation guides and city info

Thai Immigration

immigration.go.th — Official immigration information and forms

Department of Land Transport

dltd.go.th — Driving license and vehicle registration

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

mfa.go.th — Visa information and embassy contacts

Safety Reminder

Always carry a card in your wallet with your Thai address written in Thai script, your blood type, allergies, and emergency contact. This is invaluable if you're in an accident and can't communicate.

