

Thailand

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax[®], a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

Thailand is a developing nation classified as upper middle income. Located in Southeast Asia (south of Laos and north of Cambodia), the climate is extremely diverse with classifications that range from humid equatorial (no dry season) to subtropical dry winter.

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

Although yellow fever does not occur in Thailand, an official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary.

- Requirement: A vaccination certificate is required for travelers aged ≥ 1 year coming from countries with risk of YF transmission. This also applies to airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) longer than 12 hours in risk countries.

Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, Japanese encephalitis, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, or typhoid fever. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2019) Malaria risk exists throughout the year in rural (especially forested and hilly) areas of the country, mainly toward the international borders, including the southernmost provinces. There is no risk in cities (e.g. Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Pattaya), urban areas, Samui Island, and the main tourist resorts of Phuket Island. However, there is a risk in some other areas and islands. *P. falciparum* resistance to mefloquine and to quinine has been reported from areas near the borders with Cambodia and Myanmar. Artemisinin resistance has been reported near the border with Myanmar. *P. vivax* resistance to chloroquine has been reported. Human *P. knowlesi* infection has been reported.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **A** – Very limited risk of malaria transmission. Mosquito bite prevention only.
- Recommended prevention in areas near Cambodia and Myanmar borders: **C** – Risk of *P. falciparum* malaria, in combination with reported chloroquine and sulfadoxine–pyrimethamine resistance. Mosquito bite prevention plus atovaquone–proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to reported side effects and contraindications)^{a,b}

^aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

^bIn certain areas with multidrug-resistant malaria, mefloquine chemoprophylaxis is no longer recommended. At present these areas include Cambodia, Thailand, and south-eastern Myanmar.

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—Health Information for International Travel (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: Primarily in provinces that border Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, and Laos and the provinces of Kalasin, Krabi (Plai Phraya district), Nakhon Si Thammarat, Narathiwat, Pattani, Phang Nga (including Phang Nga City), Rayong, Sakon Nakhon, Songkhla, Surat Thani, and Yala, especially the rural forest and forest fringe areas of these provinces. Rare to few cases in other parts of Thailand, including other parts of Krabi Province and the cities of Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Koh Phangan, Koh Samui, and Phuket. None in the islands of Krabi Province (Koh Phi Phi, Koh Yao Noi, Koh Yao Yai, and Ko Lanta) and Pattaya City (see Map 2-26).

- ┆ Drug resistance³ : Chloroquine and mefloquine.
- ┆ Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 50% (up to 75% in some areas), *P. vivax* 50% (up to 60% in some areas), *P. ovale* and *P. knowlesi* rare.
- ┆ Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Provinces that border Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, and Laos, the provinces of Kalasin, Plai Phraya district of Krabi, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Narathiwat, Pattani, Phang Nga (including Phang Nga City), Rayong, Sakon Nakhon, Songkhla, Surat Thani, and Yala: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, or tafenoquine.⁴ All other areas of Thailand with malaria including the cities of Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Koh Phangan, Koh Samui, and Phuket: None (practice mosquito avoidance).

³ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

⁴ Primaquine and tafenoquine can cause hemolytic anemia in people with G6PD deficiency. Patients must be screened for G6PD deficiency before starting primaquine or tafenoquine. See *Tafenoquine Approved for Malaria Prophylaxis and Treatment* for more information.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

Moderate risk exists throughout the country, including in deluxe accommodations. Food and beverage precautions may reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Other Food-Borne Illnesses

Precautions to prevent seafood poisoning may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Chikungunya, dengue, leishmaniasis, murine typhus, scrub typhus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, enteroviruses, helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, monkey bites, Nipah virus, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the U.S. Department of State (DOS), U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Consular Travel Advice

Due to ongoing violence, Canada (GAC) and Australia (DFAT) advise avoiding travel to the provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and Songkhla. U.S. (DOS) and U.K. (FCO) have more limited warnings.

Terrorism Risk

Risk of attack by domestic terrorist groups exists in the southern provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and Songkhla. Risk of attack by transnational terrorist groups exists throughout the country, including Bangkok and Phuket. Targets may include domestic and international organizations and businesses; public places and events, including those frequented by tourists; and transportation systems.

Crime

Moderate risk of violent crime (sexual assault, assault, and murder) exists throughout the country, especially in Bangkok (particularly on Khaosan Road and in nightlife districts), Chiang Mai, Pattaya, in resorts in southern areas (including Phuket), and during beach parties (including Full Moon parties).

High risk of petty crime exists throughout the country, especially in Bangkok (particularly in Chatuchak Weekend Market and on Khaosan Road) and in areas frequented by foreigners.

Theft of valuables from accommodations is common.

Scams involving credit cards, gems, false identity (such as criminals posing as police officers), motor vehicle rentals, time-share and property rentals, and exorbitant fees for services have been reported.

Risk exists of robberies and/or assaults occurring after consuming intentionally drugged food or drink; tourists are frequently targeted. Highest threat areas include Bangkok (particularly in Khaosan, Patpong, and Soi Cowboy), Koh Samui Island, Pattaya, Phuket, and during Full Moon parties on Ko Pha Ngan Island.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations occur throughout the country, especially in Bangkok and other major cities, and have the potential to turn violent without warning. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities.

Unsafe Areas

A dangerous security environment exists in the southern provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Songkhla.

Armed conflict occurs and landmines and other unexploded ordnance are present in areas bordering Cambodia, including the areas surrounding the temples of Preah Vihear, Ta Moan Thom, and Ta Krabey.

Territorial disputes occur, and unmarked boundaries exist in areas bordering Burma (Myanmar).

Water Safety

Hazardous water conditions (including currents, tides, and undertows) may occur, especially in Phuket, Pattaya, and Koh Samui. Heed posted warnings, and avoid beaches that are not patrolled. Do not swim alone or after dark and do not walk on any beach after dark.

Passenger boats may be unsafe, including ferries and speedboats. Decline water transportation in vessels that appear overloaded or lack personal flotation devices or life jackets.

Basic safety standards for recreational water activities (including scuba diving, snorkeling, and jet-skiing) may not be in place. Rent water sports equipment from reputable operators. Scuba dive only with personnel certified by PADI or NAUI, and use equipment only from PADI- or NAUI-certified dive operators.

Outdoor Safety

Basic safety standards for adventure activities (including bungee jumping) are often not in place. Travelers should only use reputable adventure-sport operators for activities and equipment rentals.

Other Safety Threats

Risk exists for fatal wildlife attacks exists on elephant treks and in elephant and tiger sanctuaries. Travelers should only use reputable sanctuaries and tour operators for wildlife excursions.

Transportation Safety

Very high risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road-traffic death rate is greater than 24 per 100,000 population, the highest risk category. Carefully assess the safety of transportation options before any road travel. Speed laws are poorly enforced. Seek local advice before traveling on roads outside urban areas after dark. Driving at night is not advised.

Traffic flows on the left-hand side of the road. Travelers (including drivers and pedestrians) accustomed to traffic moving on the opposite side should be vigilant when navigating traffic.

Rail and metro services do not meet international safety standards (due to unsafe vehicles, poor maintenance, and hazardous driving).

Many taxis are unsafe. Use taxis from official ranks or dispatched via smart phone app or radio from a reputable company and ascertain the license or identification number of the dispatched vehicle.

Airline Safety

U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the civil aviation authority of this country does not oversee its air carriers in accordance with minimum international safety standards.

Natural Disasters

The monsoon season is from November through March on Koh Sumai Island and southeastern areas of the Malay Peninsula and from May through October throughout the rest of the country. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Seismic activity frequently occurs, especially in northern areas.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Thailand

- | United States: [+66] 2-205-4000; th.usembassy.gov
- | Canada: [+66] 0-2646-4300; www.thailand.gc.ca
- | United Kingdom: [+66] 2-305-8333; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-bangkok
- | Australia: [+66] 2-344-6300; thailand.embassy.gov.au

Thailand's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: www.thaiembdc.org
- | In Canada: www.thaiembassy.ca
- | In the U.K.: www.tajembassy.org.uk
- | In Australia: canberra.thaiembassy.org

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing is not required to obtain a tourist, work, or residence visa.

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