GIVE Trip Overview
Thailand Excursion
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GIVE Excursion Overview

Get ready! Your GIVE Thailand Excursion is coming up soon, so prepare yourself to be immersed in the culture of new and unique environments, to meet incredible people, and to broaden your perspectives of the world. Your Thai journey will take you all the way from the historic Old Town of Chiang Mai, to the rolling green landscapes and rustic hill-tribe villages of Chiang Dao National Park. Here you will be directly involved in English education & sustainable agriculture volunteer projects, working alongside our host community members every step of the way.

This Excursion Overview includes important information about your upcoming trip. Some of this material may appear familiar, but please read the entire overview as some information may have changed, and all of the information is important to making sure your experience is as enjoyable as it can possibly be.

Preparation Reminders Prior to Departure

All trip preparation information can be found on our website as well! Go to www.givevolunteers.org, then click “Travel Details” in the navigation and chose your destination.

Passport:

Don’t forget to bring your passport and at least two color copies of your passport to Thailand! Our office should have already received a color copy of your passport, but it is important that you bring a color copy when traveling abroad as well.

Make sure that your passport is valid and does not expire within 6 months of your return travel date. For example, if you return home on January 1, 2019, your passport expiration date cannot be prior to June 2, 2019.

If you have not yet ordered or received your passport, please contact us immediately by phone at +1 (206) 973-7991 or email at info@givevolunteers.org.

Visa:

There are a few different options for visas, so read below. Depending on your citizenship, you may be exempt from obtaining a visa, can receive one on arrival, or order prior to departure.

1. Tourist Visa Exemption
If you **are** a citizen of one of the below listed countries, you **do not need to obtain a visa** as you fall into the Tourist Visa Exemption category. In this case, you are required to:

1. Provide **Proof of Onward Travel**: bring proof of confirmed air, train, bus, or boat tickets showing you will leave Thailand within 30 days from your arrival date. If you cannot provide proof, you will have to obtain a tourist visa (which is outlined below).

2. Provide **Proof of Finances**: Thailand requires travelers to have proof of adequate finances for the duration of your stay when you enter into the country, such as a traveler’s check or cash equivalent to 10,000 Baht (approx. $300 USD) per person and 20,000 Baht (approx. $600 USD) per family. A screenshot of your bank statement would be sufficient.

3. You may need an address in Thailand and, if so, write “Eco Resort Chiang Mai, 109 Bumrungrad Rd. Watkate, Muang Chiang Mai 50000 Thailand”

Countries with the Tourist Visa Exemption:

- Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bahrain, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vietnam

If you **are not** a citizen of one of the above countries, please check with your local Consulate to find out if you need a Thailand tourist visa. You may also be able to obtain a Visa On Arrival and the process of how to go about doing this is explained below (but still check with your consulate!).

2. Visa on Arrival (If you do not qualify for the Tourist Visa Exemption)

If you are not a citizen of the above listed counties that have a Tourist Visa Exemption (see above), you may still be able to obtain a Visa on Arrival, depending on your citizenship. A Visa on Arrival allows passport holders of the countries listed below* to enter Thailand if they meet the following requirements:

1. The visit is strictly for tourism purposes.
2. You have a confirmed return ticket to show proof of a flight out of Thailand within 30 or 15 days of entry, as appropriate. Open tickets do not qualify. Traveling overland out of Thailand by train, bus, etc. to Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia (including en route to Singapore), Myanmar, etc. is not accepted as proof of exiting Thailand.
*Important Note: You may be asked to show your flight ticket on entering Thailand. If you do not possess a flight ticket to show you will be exiting Thailand within 30 or 15 days of entry you will be most likely to be refused entry.

3. Checkpoints for ON ARRIVAL Visas are available at the Don Muang International Airport in Bangkok, and Chiang Mai International Airport in Chiang Mai


*Bhutan, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, India, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Maldives, Mauritius, Oman, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakìa, Slovenia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Ethiopia, Taiwan, Bulgaria, Andorra, Malta, Romania, San Marino.

5. Provide Proof of Finances: you will also need proof that you have funds of at least 20,000 THB per person during your stay in Thailand. A fee of 1,000 THB is payable upon entry and is subject to change without notice.

6. You may need to provide an in-country contact and, if so, use the following:

   Sujitra Fongngam
   115/8 Viengping Rd, Changklan, Chiang Mai, Thailand
   Phone: +66 980098151

3. Non-Tourist Visa Exemption or Non-Visa on Arrival Travelers (If you do not qualify under the Tourist Visa Exemption)

If you are not eligible to enter Thailand under the Tourist Visa Exemption or Visa on Arrival, then you will need to obtain a visa with the Royal Thai Embassy prior to their visit.

**Please note that visa information is subject to change by national immigration and customs agencies. Check with your native Consulate for visa details well before your departure date.

Vaccinations:

GIVE is unable to provide you with a list of recommended vaccinations for traveling in Thailand. You can find a list of recommended vaccinations on the Center for Disease Control website: http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm. Vaccinations and medical precautions are your discretion with the recommendations of your doctor or travel clinic.
Although there are no vaccination requirements for travelers from the United States, United Kingdom, or Australia to enter into Thailand, GIVE strongly recommends that you contact your doctor or visit an immunization clinic to discuss vaccinations as soon as possible, as some vaccinations take time to take effect or you may need a course of vaccinations. Inform your doctor that you are traveling to Thailand and the activities you plan to participate in so they can provide guidance. Note that GIVE cannot provide you with vaccinations before or during your trip.

To learn about vaccination recommendations or to find a travel clinic near you, visit Centers for Disease Control at [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm).

**Medications:**

GIVE is unable to provide you with a list of recommended medications for your excursion. It is your discretion with the recommendation of a doctor or travel clinic if you choose to take medications on your excursion.

You are responsible for providing your own over-the-counter or prescription medications throughout your excursion. This includes allergy medications, anti-inflammatory medications, etc. Please discuss these concerns with your doctor before your excursion. If you have asthma (even mild), please do not forget to bring your inhaler! Also, it’s a good idea to plan ahead and bring vitamins (Vitamin C) and over-the-counter medications in case you start to get sick.

If any changes to your health occur, it is critical that you update your Traveler Information in your Volunteer Profile as soon as possible. You can access your Volunteer Profile from our website at [www.givevolunteers.org](http://www.givevolunteers.org). If you make any changes within 15 days of your excursion, please notify us by email at info@givevolunteers.org. If you plan to take medications on the trip, please bring the medication name and description to provide to your GIVE guides when you arrive in Thailand.

**Safety and General Health Concerns:**

International travel inherently involves risk and we maintain a culture of comprehensive risk mitigation while carrying out our mission to inspire growth, empower global citizens, and ignite sustainable change worldwide. GIVE strives to minimize risk through proactive measures, with the ultimate goal of providing you with an experience of a lifetime that is not only educational and inspiring, but, more importantly, safe and secure.

In large part, the international crime warnings surrounding travel in Thailand become an issue when traveling alone or with one other person in unfamiliar, large cities. The majority of time spent on our Thailand excursion takes place in rural areas, where you will always be with at least 10-20 other volunteers and at least two guides. This is a group excursion, where individual volunteers will be following our planned itinerary throughout the duration of their excursion. In addition, we have forged strong relationships with local leaders and community members, making the environment welcoming and friendly. In
the event that an unforeseen circumstance does arise, we are prepared with a comprehensive risk management plan to respond to the incident(s), and we are therefore fully prepared with resources, such as medical supplies and routes to local hospitals and clinics.

To protect your general health in Thailand, it is important that you take good care of your body, and that you are physically prepared to be a volunteer. We work outdoors daily engaging in strenuous physical projects in a tropical environment. This means that you must be aware of your hydration, sun protection, and nutrition at all times. In the event that you do become ill or need to seek medical attention, we can arrange for you to visit a local clinic or nearby hospital to receive care.

**Flights and Arrival in Thailand**

**Flights:**

Before you depart, be sure to check your flight departure time online, or if you booked with Corporate Traveler, contact an agent to make sure that your flight information has not changed.

GIVE group flight itineraries include routes and layovers through specific airports so that you and other GIVE volunteers departing from the same region may travel together. You can meet other GIVE volunteers en route to Thailand during your layover(s), or on the plane, so be on the lookout for fellow volunteers. To make it easy to identify each other, tie a green ribbon or string to your carry-on bag. You can even make a GIVE sign to find other volunteers while in transit to Thailand.

**Arrival in Thailand:**

Since we arrange group flight itineraries, volunteers will arrive at the Chiang Mai International Airport (CNX) at (or around) the same time.

You will receive an immigration form on the airplane to complete before entering Thailand. You will give this form to a customs agent upon your arrival. This form will ask you a few questions about your plans in Thailand, please answer with the following:

- **Address in Thailand:** Eco Resort Chiang Mai, 109 Bumrungrad Rd.Watkate, Muang Chiang Mai 50000 Thailand
- **Accommodation:** check the box that says “Hotel”
- **Purpose of Visit:** check the box that says “Holiday”

After you exit the plane, you will enter the airport into the Arrivals Hall. This is where you will go through Thailand immigration with your customs form. There are multiple arrival desks, so line up with your passport in-hand and customs card completely filled out and ready to show to the immigration officer. **Make sure to KEEP the Departure**
Card that will be given to you on arrival throughout your trip, as you will need it upon departure.

After you pass through customs, you will head over to baggage claim. Collect your baggage here, and exit where your GIVE guide will greet you in a green GIVE shirt just outside the arrival gate doors! **Do not exit the arrival terminal until you have met your GIVE Guide.** You will then have the opportunity to exchange your money to Thai Baht or use an ATM. If you’d like assistance withdrawing Thai Baht (exchange rate, how much to withdraw, etc.), your guides will be happy to help.

After the group collects their baggage and uses the ATM, you will take our transportation to our accommodations in Chiang Mai, which is only about 20 minutes from the airport.

**Airport Pickups:**

If you don’t immediately see your GIVE guides upon arrival, be sure to wait in the international arrivals hall until they arrive. **Do not leave the arrivals terminal, stay inside the airport and keep an eye out for your guides in a green GIVE shirt!**

**Flight Delays or Cancellations:**

In the event of flight cancellations, unexpected delays, or changes, here’s what to do:

1. **Go straight to the gate agent at the airport.** They will be the best resource to assist you to rebook your flight. If you’re not yet at the airport, skip to step 2.

2. While waiting to speak to the gate agent or if you’re not at the airport, call your booking agents or the airlines directly. If you booked through Corporate Traveler (the new name for Flight Center in the USA), the numbers are below for after-hours assistance. Our agents may have access to alternative airlines not readily available to the gate agent at the airport.

   Corporate Traveler USA: +1 877-862-7051  
   Flight Center UK: +44 203 056 7993  
   Flight Center AUS: 1300 557-813

*If there are other GIVE volunteers, join together and choose one point person to speak with the agent to rebook flights.*

3. **After your flight has been rebooked, e-mail your updated itinerary to GIVE AND post your updated itinerary on your GIVE group’s Facebook page!** Make sure to include the airline, number, arrival time, and names of other GIVE volunteers with you.

4. Your guides will make alternative arrangements for your pickup – note that **delayed flights may incur additional pickup fees** (see below sections). Contact
GIVE if you have any further questions at info@givevolunteers.org or call our Headquarters at +1 (206) 973-7991.

5. If flight changes result in a layover of more than six hours or if you have to pay additional fees for your delay, contact your Travel Insurance provider. They can assist you with alternate arrangements and explain how your insurance policy applies in your circumstances. **Make sure to keep all receipts!**

**Talking to gate agents at the airport and calling your flight agents/the airlines are the best resource to rebook your ticket.** If you have additional questions or need support, GIVE monitors the lines 24/7 while volunteers are in route to their host country.

**Next Day Flight Arrival:**

If your flight is cancelled or delayed and you are unable to arrive to Chiang Mai Airport on your trip start date, do not panic. **Follow the same steps outlined above for delays and cancellations.** Make sure you email your new flight itinerary and post in your GIVE Trip Facebook Group so your guides can arrange alternative transportation. If you are not in the Facebook Group, you can contact your guides directly. (You will receive an email with your guide’s contact information prior to departure)

**Note: In the case of a next-day arrival, you will be responsible for paying for transportation to our accommodations to meet the group.** Depending on the circumstances, your Travelers Insurance may reimburse you for costs incurred as a result of your flight delay or cancellation.

**Important Note:**

Any travel expenses outside of the GIVE excursion itinerary are the responsibility of the volunteer to pay out-of-pocket, including costs associated with delayed and/or interrupted travel to and from the host location. We require all volunteers to have International Travel Insurance that may provide reimbursement for costs if they are within the policy coverage.

It’s always a good idea to bring an extra change of clothes (ideally, culturally appropriate clothing that covers your knees and shoulders for women), all medications, important documents and money IN YOUR CARRY ON LUGGAGE in the case of a next day arrival, lost luggage or any other unforeseen circumstances. Our guides will do everything in their power to obtain clothing and appropriate items if your luggage is lost or delayed. In adherence with our itinerary, we will be traveling in areas that we require all female volunteers to cover knees and shoulders, so it would be beneficial to have spare clothing with you.

**Lost or Delayed Baggage:**

If your baggage does not arrive at the airport, do not panic. Go to the lost luggage counter
to make a lost luggage claim. Please give the representative your guide’s name and phone number to contact when your luggage arrives. Keep the copy of your lost luggage claim. Depending on the circumstances, your Traveler’s Insurance may reimburse you for each day that your bag is lost or delayed.

**Donations**

For the time being we are not requesting donations to be brought from outside of Thailand, unless our education program requires materials not readily available in Thailand. This will help to stimulate the local economies by buying directly from our host communities and/or in Chiang Mai. Your support is in no way less desirable, we are simply encouraging the most sustainable and direct impact as possible.

We ask you to please avoid bringing donations from home, as there are more than enough materials for sale in Chiang Mai and we always strive to support the local economy. If there are specific supplies necessary that we can’t purchase in country, your guides will notify you well in advance in your Facebook group.

Donations towards education can always be accepted through our Students4Students campaign on our website, here: [https://www.givevolunteers.org/global-citizenship/s4s/](https://www.givevolunteers.org/global-citizenship/s4s/).

**Money**

**Notify Your Local Bank Before Departure (Important!):**

Prior to your departure, inform your bank that you are traveling to Thailand. This is important so that your bank does not put a hold on your account for irregular transactions. If your bank does put a hold on your account, you will not be able to access your money and it could take days to be able to use your card or access money from your bank. It only takes a quick phone call to your bank before you depart to inform them of your destination and length of travel to eliminate any potential problems! It is also encouraged to bring more than one debit/credit card (if available) just in case one does not work or is lost/stolen.

**Currency and Exchange Rates:**

The national currency in Thailand is the Thai Baht.

The current exchange rate is ~$1 US Dollar (USD) is equal to about 33 Thai Baht. We encourage you to look up current exchange rates prior to your departure as rates do fluctuate. You must use Thai Baht if you plan on spending money shopping, eating, or engaging in other activities. If you do bring USDs to exchange, you will have a better exchange rate with large bills. It is important to bring new and crisp bills, as ripped or dirty bills will most likely not be accepted.
Although uncommon, you may be able to exchange money at your local bank before you depart for Thailand. Most banks do not carry Thai Baht and have to order the currency. Even if you bring Thai Baht, be prepared to withdraw cash from the ATM at the airport upon arrival in Thailand if needed.

It’s important to take into consideration that you will only be able to withdraw funds from an ATM while we are in Chiang Mai on the first and last day of the trip, as the villages we will travel to do not have ATMs or banks. Therefore, carefully consider your spending habits when withdrawing money. Plan ahead so you are not left without cash. Your GIVE guides will remind you to use the ATM in the airport and other locations before we depart Chiang Mai. Make sure to plan ahead so you do not run out of money!

**Money Recommendations During Your Excursion:**

Since spending habits vary from person to person, please plan according to your own personal habits! GIVE suggests planning to spend Thai currency equivalent to $300 to $400 USD for purchasing souvenirs, gifts, snacks, drinks, etc. You can always ask your GIVE guide for help translating and calculating exchange rates while shopping or purchasing souvenirs.

All of your fresh, drinking water, as well as three meals a day are provided for you during your GIVE excursion. Since we encourage you to experience purchasing and tasting the delicious local cuisine (as well as helping to boost the local economy), expect to purchase a couple of meals or snacks for yourself when the opportunities arise.

**Communication**

**Adapters:**

You will be able to charge your cameras and other electronic devices throughout most of your time in Thailand. Thailand often takes either a flat blade plug, (like the US) or a two round pin plug.

Note that our accommodations in the hill tribe villages often run on generators so electricity will shut off occasionally. However, you will have sufficient time to charge your electronics, and you will be notified of the times and places where electricity will not be available. Generally, there will be 3-4 nights throughout the trip with no electricity as we explore more remote villages.

**Contacting Home:**

We understand that your family would like to know you arrived safety in Thailand. To satisfy this, an email will be sent to your emergency contact after your entire group has arrived and settled in our accommodations. Please double check and verify that your emergency contact's information is correct on your volunteer profile and that they are aware that we will be sending them an email upon your arrival. We will also post photos
on our Facebook page and other social media outlets throughout your excursion, so let your family and friends know to follow our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/givevolunteers!

An important aspect of traveling internationally is to “unplug” from your life back home and “plug in” to the surrounding environment. **We ask our volunteers to unplug from phones, social media, and contact with friends and family at home during their GIVE excursion to truly engage in their volunteer experience.** Please keep in mind that access to electronics and Wi-Fi will be very limited during your trip, but disconnecting from your daily life will allow you to plug into different parts of yourself and truly experience Thailand, ultimately allowing you to have a more enjoyable, relaxed, and authentic experience.

Make sure to inform your family that **communication is limited and is not to be expected.** There will be extremely limited access to phone or Internet throughout your excursion, so do not plan to contact home daily. Tell your family that communication is extremely limited and that they should not expect to hear from you. In the event of emergencies or case-by-case circumstances, your guide will arrange for you to call or email home. Wi-Fi is generally available on the first and last day of your excursion while we’re in the city of Chiang Mai.

**Home Contacting You:**

It is important to let your family know **not to expect to have communication with you** while you are on your Thai excursion. For status updates or general questions, your family can contact the GIVE Headquarters at +1 (206) 973-7991 or email info@givevolunteers.org while you are in Thailand. Our GIVE team will be able to relay any messages to you and your guides.

For emergencies or non-emergencies, your family can contact the GIVE offices. For time-sensitive emergencies **only,** your parents can contact your guides directly. You will be emailed these numbers in the near future to have and use in emergency situations only.

GIVE will occasionally post photos of your excursion to our social media, so be sure to let your family and friends know they can follow your excursion on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, as well as GIVE’s other social media sites. GIVE’s social media webpages can be accessed through the social media icons on our website at www.givevolunteers.org. Please inform your family that we will do our best to post photos of your group throughout the trip!

**Weather**

Come prepared for hot weather throughout the day, sprinkled with short, sometimes-heavy, rain showers, as well as physical activity in the heat. Please see our suggested packing list below for recommendations on what to pack.
In the hill-tribe villages north of Chiang Mai, November through January are the cooler, dryer months, with temperatures dipping as low as 40°F in the late night/early morning and then heating up again to the 80’s and 90’s throughout the day. Definitely pack some warmer clothes to sleep in if you’re joining us in December or January!

March - May are the hottest months, when temperatures can soar well over 100°F. There is a rainy season from May – September, characterized by sunny, humid days intermixed with short, powerful rain showers. Expect plenty of rain showers and lots of mud this time of year (July and August especially), as the seasonal monsoons transform the Thai highlands into a lush, green, tropical, albeit muddy, oasis.

The sun is very powerful in this region, so it is important to bring more than enough sunscreen and even a sunhat to protect you from the sun. We take a break from our volunteer projects in the early afternoon because it is the hottest part of the day, where you are free to relax, take a nap, or engage in other activities with fellow volunteers or village locals.

**Accommodations**

Our accommodations are comfortable and equipped with necessary amenities, such as running water, bathrooms, showers, beds with sheets, etc. You will have access to electricity for the large majority of your trip; however, brief power outages are common throughout your trip and you will be spending 3 days, 2 nights in more remote villages without access to electricity at the end of your trip. This is why we highly recommend bringing your own rechargeable portable battery for charging phones and other small electronics. You do not need to bring your own blankets or pillows, as they are provided for you, but we highly recommend bringing a microfiber towel for more remote villages. For the duration of your trip, you will share sleeping quarters and bathrooms with your fellow volunteers, so remember to practice the golden rule! If you’d like to room with a friend, please let us know before your excursion and we will be more than happy to arrange that for you. Otherwise, your guides on the ground will provide room assignments when your group arrives in Thailand.

Please remember that you will be staying in rural communities in a tropical climate, which means you will encounter different weather conditions and insects than you are accustomed to at home. We will provide mosquito nets when necessary and will always fully prepare/advise you on any necessary precautions to take. Please thoroughly review the packing list (page 15) to ensure that you’re adequately prepared. **Most importantly, arrive with an open mind and commitment to push yourself beyond your comfort zone!**

**Luggage**

We encourage you to pack as light as possible in bags convenient for in-country travel, such as travel backpacks or duffle bags. **It is required that you bring an additional day**
pack/overnight bag for nights that are spent at neighboring villages and during the last few days of the trip when we will be travelling by bamboo raft to other villages. Please do not bring boxy, rolling suitcases! We will be staying in two very different locations—the city of Chiang Mai and the hill-tribe villages further north—and we travel by pick-up truck taxis the majority of the time. For these reasons, it is best to pack light. To compensate for your lack of excess clothing, there will be several opportunities for you to do laundry while on your excursion.

Before transporting your luggage from your home to Thailand, check the baggage rules and regulations for your specific airlines. Generally for international flights, the airlines allow you to bring one personal item (45 in/ 111cm), one carry-on bag (62 in/ 158cm), and one checked bag (50lbs/ 23kgs) at no additional cost. It is important to remember that you cannot have any liquids that exceed 3.4 ounces or 100ml in your carry-on bags, so be sure to make note of that while packing at home. Please refer to the TSA website for more detailed information about baggage regulations at http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm.

Please be aware that if you plan on purchasing souvenirs, airline weight restrictions may incur extra charges when you return home.

Important Note Regarding Valuables:

When packing your luggage do not put anything valuable in your checked bag. This includes electronics, copies of your passport, medications, etc. It is best to pack all valuables in your carry-on bag. Pack at least one change of clothes and a small pack of toiletries in your carry-on bag in case your luggage is delayed. Put luggage locks on your checked bag as a safety precaution. With many connecting flights and traveling such a long distance it is important to take all precautions to be sure your belongs arrive safely.

Packing for Your Excursion

People tend to over pack while traveling and we suggest that you challenge yourself to only pack the bare necessities. Be realistic and ask yourself, “What do I really need to have?” Please adopt the motto “Travel Light!” Our best suggestion is to lay out what you think you need, and only bring 75% of that. You will realize when you arrive in country that you need a lot less than you think!

Generally, volunteers will wear the same work clothes multiple times, as they may stain with cement or dirt from working all day. Also keep in mind that many of the clothes you wear while working and trekking will become very muddy, so don’t expect them to remain clean when you return home!

While working at the school teaching the kids, exploring local temples, or walking through villages, you will need to wear conservative clothing that covers your knees and
shoulders. Bring at least 4-5 conservative outfits, adopting the same methods of repeating outfits just like when you are at the worksite.

In accordance with the cultural customs of the communities that we will be working in, you will be required to wear “culturally appropriate” clothing for the majority of the trip. We require our female volunteers to cover their knees and shoulders and to not wear any low cut, spandex or see through clothing at these times. Rules for males are less strict, but they should certainly bring 2-3 outfits that cover their shoulders and knees. There will be specific times that this will not be necessary, such as when we are in Chiang Mai or at our private accommodations, but it is encouraged that you plan on wearing clothes that abide by these guidelines for the majority of the trip. Please note that by adhering to these rules you are practicing sensitivity and respect both to our host communities.

*For those of you traveling on to Laos, the packing list for the Laos Excursion is relatively similar to the Thailand Excursion. Please plan to re-wear majority of the same clothing, as there will also be several opportunities for you to wash your clothes in Laos as well.

Packing Checklist of Recommended Items:

General Clothing

☐ 1 lightweight raincoat/poncho
☐ 1 sweatshirt, lightweight jacket or sweater (*bring a heavier coat and hat for cold nights in December and January*)
☐ 4-5 T-shirts or tank tops to wear during down time (*females cannot wear tank-tops on project sites or in public, but they can wear them at accommodations as long as they are conservative i.e. no spaghetti straps, not low cut, no open back, etc.*)
☐ 3-4 pairs of shorts to wear during down time (athletic shorts are best)
☐ Underwear and socks. Keep in mind that on volunteering days you may need two pairs of socks daily (*one for morning, one for evening*) as they can get wet and muddy.
☐ 1-2 swimsuits (*bikini style swimsuits are allowed but no thongs or cheeky bottoms. These swimsuits can be worn while we are in Chiang Mai but please keep in mind that when we are in the hill-tribe villages, females will be asked to wear a t-shirt and shorts over their swimsuits*)
☐ Sunglasses
☐ Hat for sun protection
☐ 3-4 sport or athletic bras (*females*)
☐ Pajamas or comfortable sleeping clothes (*it gets down to 40°F at night in December & January*)
☐ 1-2 “nice” outfits for special occasions and nights out.
  -At least one of these outfits must be culturally appropriate

Volunteer Worksite Clothing

☐ 4-5 T-Shirts for construction work - these will get dirty! (*females cannot wear tank-tops in public or on the worksite, but males can wear them in any non-formal setting*)
2-3 athletic shorts for construction work (Both females and males can wear shorts while on the worksite. Please keep in mind that we will be working alongside locals, so females must not wear 'short shorts' or spandex)

1 pair of long pants to wear on the Permaculture Site. Light-weight, breathable and durable fabrics are ideal, such as soft-shell hiking pants.

2-3 pairs of loose fitting (no tights or yoga pants) clothes that cover your knees for volunteering at the school, visiting temples and exploring villages. (lightweight pants, knee length shorts, or knee length skirt – Elephant pants are a great go-to!)

1-2 Yoga pants, leggings or workout capris are encouraged for the worksite (not at school) and during down-time

4-5 modest shirts that completely cover your shoulders, chest and midriff for volunteering at the school, visiting temples and exploring villages. **If you plan on teaching you are not allowed to wear shirts that are scoop, V-neck, sheer, off the shoulder or cropped** (**Wear your GIVE shirt!**)

1 pair of work gloves

**Footwear**

1 pair of closed-toed working boots or running shoes for the construction site. **Keep in mind that these will get wet & dirty!** If you need to bring an extra pair of boots/shoes for hiking or casual wear, please do so.

1 pair of closed-toed hiking shoes or hiking boots for jungle trekking, strapped sandals such as Tevas and Chacos are not sufficient (**Bring shoes with great traction for muddy trails – these will get wet and dirty!**)

1 pair of Flip flops or Sandals. These are crucial for walking around the villages. It’s impolite to wear shoes inside people’s homes, temples and some businesses, so a good pair of sandals will make it easy to slip on and off.

**Other Gear**

Small day pack or overnight backpack (**waterproof/water resistant if possible**) that you can use for bringing to the school, worksites, overnight trips to neighboring villages and during bamboo rafting.

Rain cover for your daypack or big pack in case of rain during travel.

Small dry-bag for bamboo rafting. GIVE provides a shared waterproof dry bag for valuables during bamboo rafting, but it is highly encouraged to bring your own.

1 towel (**a microfiber towel is recommended for easy packing and quick dry purposes**)

Toiletries: shampoo/conditioner, face wash/wipes, toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, etc.

1-2 large bottles of sunscreen (30 spf or higher)

2-3 large bottles of insect repellent (**Expect to use this every day – especially in July & August**)

Anti-itch cream/wipes

Hand sanitizer/hand wipes

**Refillable water bottle**

Reusable coffee cup and straw to minimize plastic waste.

Large Ziploc Baggies/Waterproof bag (**these are good to protect cameras and valuables from getting wet, especially during bamboo rafting**)

**Headlamp and batteries** (**REQUIRED** for cave exploration and recommended for late night bathroom trips. **Handheld flashlights are not sufficient**)

Rechargeable portable battery for charging phones and small electronics in villages without electricity.

Phone or a watch with an alarm clock

Headphones – **roosters roam around and can be quite loud while we sleep in the villages!**
GIVE Excursion Overview

- Small first aid kit
- 1 good book
- Camera
- Vitamins (multi-vitamins, vitamin C, Airborne, Emergen-C, etc.)
- Over-the-counter fever reducers, gastrointestinal medications, anti-inflammatories, electrolyte packets, motion sickness medication, etc. (optional)
- English/Thai dictionary (optional)
- Deck of cards or other games (optional, for hanging out at night)
- Notebook with pens and pencils to write about your excursions (optional)
- Money belt (optional)
- Snacks (optional, but HIGHLY recommended!)
- Outlet converter/adapter

**Spending Money:** Thai Baht is necessary to purchase snacks, souvenirs, etc. in Thailand.

- $300-$400 (equivalent in USD) spending money for souvenirs, snacks, and other opportunities. We will have very limited access to ATMs throughout the trip, and 1 day to exchange and/or withdraw funds in Chiang Mai at the beginning of the trip.

**Donations:** We ask you to please avoid bringing donations from home, as there are more than enough materials for sale in Chiang Mai and we always strive to support the local economy. If there are specific supplies necessary that we can’t purchase in country, your guides will notify you well in advance in your Facebook group.

**IMPORTANT!** Don’t forget to pack your passport!!!

- Passport
- Two color copies of your passport

**Volunteer Projects**

You will be directly involved in groundbreaking projects intended to maximize our positive impact on multiple communities in Northern Thailand, specifically in the hill-tribe villages of Muang Khong. This impact will be felt not only in the classroom, but also on the ground with the various projects designed to promote grassroots development in the community.

Each day you can choose to assist in either our English Education or Sustainable Agriculture projects. We encourage you to try both aspects while in country, as it greatly enhances your overall experience and impact you will have in the community. Here are our main focuses during your time in Thailand:

**Educational Programs:**
The schools in our host communities are filled with passionate teachers and enthusiastic students. However, these rural schools are not provided the same access to native speaking English teachers as most schools throughout the country. Nonetheless, these students are expected to pass the same standardized exams (which are administered in English!), which will allow them to advance to secondary and tertiary education. Furthermore, a growing number of employment opportunities are becoming dependent on strong English language skills. GIVE is working to provide equal educational opportunities in our host communities by offering fundamental English lessons from native speaking volunteers at all four schools in the region. In order to maintain consistent quality of instruction and support for our volunteers in the classroom, all lessons are planned and delivered in conjunction with our TEFL-certified Education Coordinators and local teachers.

Muang Khong School Permaculture Project:

Over the last 50 years, rapid deforestation caused by commercial logging and agriculture has dramatically affected the lives of everyone in Thailand, from urban dwellers in Bangkok who have been displaced by massive flooding, to the rural northern farmers who have seen their soil quality and crop yields degraded as a result of drought and desertification. Permaculture provides a timely opportunity for farmers in our host communities to regenerate their soil, conserve water resources, minimize land usage and increase crop yield; however, considering the dire consequences of a failed season, many farmers are naturally hesitant to experiment with new techniques. In response, GIVE is working alongside students at local schools to create thriving examples of sustainable farming practices, producing a large variety of nutritious fruits, vegetables and livestock on relatively small plots of land. This project not only empowers students to provide themselves with delicious, nutritious food throughout the school year, but also educates them on the importance of protecting natural resources while still producing enough food to sustain their families’ diet and income. Ultimately, we hope to provide nearby farmers with living proof of permaculture’s positive potential in the region, inviting them to learn and practice these innovative techniques on our plot so they can eventually begin implementing them on a larger scale.

Reforestation & Asian Elephant Conservation

Deforestation throughout Thailand has pushed many native species to the brink of extinction, as their habitats are clear-cut for commercial logging and agriculture. The Asian Elephant, an iconic, symbolic and keystone species in Thailand, stands at the frontlines of this battle and you will have the opportunity to support them in a number of ways. Not only will you get to learn about these majestic creatures while interacting with them in their natural habitat, you’ll also be directly contributing to their welfare and conservation through a variety of responsible tourism initiatives. A portion of your trip costs will be donated to the Thai Elephant Conservation Center, which provides free veterinary care to elephants throughout the country and trains mahouts to adopt positive
reinforcement training techniques. You will also get to spend a day volunteering with Chiang Mai University’s Forest Restoration and Research Unit (FORRU), helping with anything from tree planting, seed germination, seedling potting & care, seed collection, weeding and fertilizing at one of their tree nurseries or reforestation plots.

**Adventure Activities**

A tremendous amount of effort and energy will be poured into our volunteer projects and, while we will work hard to get those projects done, we make sure to play hard as well. This is the time to broaden your horizons by exploring the culture, landscapes and wildlife of Thailand!

After volunteering throughout each day we are in Muang Khong, we’ll take the evenings to participate in some fun cultural and adventurous activities in nearby villages and surrounding areas.

Here is a list of activities you will have the chance to do while in Thailand:

- Journey to remote indigenous villages
- Shop at local markets
- Volleyball, soccer, and other sports with local kids
- Traditional crafts lessons
- Thai cooking class
- Trek through the jungle
- Explore limestone caves
- Help local farmers prepare their rice fields
- Karaoke night!
- Build a bamboo raft & take it down the Mae Tang River
- Hike and swim with elephants in the jungle
- Learn tribal dances around a bonfire
- Bungee jump 50 meters!

**Itinerary (Sample)**

This is a sample itinerary of GIVE’s Thailand Excursion, and, as such, will be modified during your excursion. Once you have arrived, you can expect to receive a general overview of what the trip will look like and each night, you will get a full and detailed itinerary of the next day’s activities and schedule. Traveling abroad requires flexibility based on weather, wellness of the group, and other important factors - and we appreciate your understanding and adaptability with the itinerary.

**Day 1:**

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Trip Start: Become acquainted with other GIVErs on the group flight! After you’ve landed, you will travel with some of your fellow GIVErs through customs and baggage claim, and later will be greeted by your guides and fellow group members. After everyone is safe, sound, and together, we will drive to our accommodations in the vibrant city of Chiang Mai, where you will spend the first night getting to know your fellow volunteers and guides.

Day 2:

After breakfast, we’ll dive in to the details of the journey ahead, learn more about Thai culture and then take an introductory Thai language lesson! After the Thai lesson, we’ll catch a tuk-tuk taxi to the ancient temple ruins of Wat Chedi Luang, where a local guide will explain the history of Chiang Mai and the Lanna Kingdom, the basic principles of Buddhism and some interesting facts about Thai culture.

In the afternoon, we’ll volunteer with Chiang Mai University’s Forest Restoration and Research Unit (FORRU), helping with anything from tree planting, seed germination, seedling potting & care, seed collection, weeding and fertilizing at one of their tree nurseries or reforestation plots.

That evening, we’ll visit the Chiang Mai Night Bazaar to sample some world-famous Thai street food and scope out souvenirs!

Day 3:

After breakfast, we’ll take a 4-hour drive north through dense jungles and limestone mountains towards our home for the next week – the hill-tribe villages of Muang Khong. After settling into your bungalows, we’ll meet as a group to discuss all the groundbreaking volunteer projects in store for the coming days.

Days 4 - 9 (Typical day of volunteering):

Start early each morning with a locally prepared, delicious breakfast. After breakfast, we will begin work at the education or permaculture project site between 8:00 - 8:30 AM. You will volunteer until lunchtime, when we will return to our accommodations to have a filling lunch and relax for a bit before returning to the project site for the rest of the afternoon. In the early evening, we wrap up volunteer work and head out on one of our daily excursions, such as exploring limestone caves, Thai cooking lessons, exploring nearby villages and temples, playing sports with local kids, learning to make native crafts, or just relaxing by the river. We will have dinner around 6:30 PM and spend the rest of the evening either joining group discussions or just relaxing at our accommodations.

*During our week in Muang Khong, we will spend one night away in a more remote village, and then return back to our main accommodations the next day.
Day 10:

Embark on an epic adventure through the jungle on our way to the Karen hill-tribe village of Ba Kao Lam, home to our three elephant hosts: Pooh Noi, Mae Boon Sri and Mae Boon Yeun. In the afternoon we’ll learn how to build bamboo rafts with our local guides and that evening we’ll gather for a discussion on elephant conservation in Asia!

Days 11-12:

Spend 2 days directly interacting with the most revered creatures in SE Asia – Asian elephants. Support this incredible species in Thailand by working alongside their mahouts (elephant whisperers) to track elephants through the jungle, perform basic health checks, bathe elephants in the river, prepare healthy snacks to feed the elephants, and join nightly discussions about elephant conservation in Asia.

On day 12, we’ll embark on a bamboo-rafting journey down the Mae Tang River towards the Lahu Village of Pong Ngan. There we’ll celebrate one final night in the jungle, sharing a barbecue dinner with our hosts and learning traditional dances around the bonfire!

Day 13:

Our bamboo-rafting journey culminates with the fastest rapids and best views yet! Strap in and enjoy the ride or grab a pole and help steer us our final adventure in Thailand… a 160-foot BUNGEE JUMP! (Or drift karts and zorbing if heights aren’t your thing). After that it’s back to Chiang Mai for one final night of reflection and celebration.

Day 14:

All good things must come to an end. Soak up your last few hours in Asia before heading home, or join GIVE’s Laos Excursion to round out your SE Asia experience!

Culture Shock

Culture shock is a strange feeling many of us will face when we are traveling in a country that is culturally different from our own. Knowledge about symptoms of culture shock can help us identify and work through the shock as we continue to be involved with the community and culture. Below is a list of symptoms of culture shock that you may experience while traveling in a different country. Do not be worried about culture shock as it is a normal part of the travel process, and completely expected to happen to just about everyone. If you experience culture shock, your guides will assist you to work through your feelings and experience, so don’t be embarrassed or afraid to say anything to them. We have all been through it, so don’t think you’re the only one to feel this way! You’re not alone!
Symptoms:

- Preoccupation with health
- Trying too hard to absorb everything in the new culture or country
- Insomnia, desire to sleep too much or too little
- Changes in temperament, depression
- Developing stereotypes about the new culture
- Feeling vulnerable, feeling powerless
- Irritability, resentment, unwillingness to interact with others
- Identifying with the old culture or idealizing the old country
- Loss of identity
- Melancholy, loneliness, sadness
- Lack of confidence and feelings of insecurity
- Developing obsessions with over-cleanliness
- Longing for family
- Feelings of being lost and overlooked

If you experience any of the above, please reach out to your GIVE guides as they will provide you with support. Your guides will help you decipher your feelings and cope with these symptoms, making the adjustment to this new land and new culture easier on your mind, and a lot less stressful on your body.

While on Your Excursion

Do not hesitate to let your GIVE guides know what you need while on your excursion. We are here for you! We want you to work hard and enjoy this experience to the fullest, so make sure if there is something preventing you from enjoying yourself entirely to let your guide know so he/she can help you through it! GIVE is dedicated to inspire growth, empower the marginalized, and encourage sustainable change worldwide. With your help, we can make this goal a reality!

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Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you and we are excited to see you in Thailand!