

Welcome!

South East Asia is rich in lush nature and fascinating cultures, us as visitors need to respect and protect this unique heritage.

Tourism impact can be damaging to local communities as well as to their environment. As guests in the region, we have the duty to preserve these destinations by acting responsibly and sustainably.

In this booklet you will find a set of useful tips on how to contribute as a traveler to minimize this negative impact on local inhabitants and the biodiversity, and how help to contribute to the sustainable development of the countries visited.

We wish you an enjoyable holiday!

Understand cultural differences

The most important principle to remember when traveling is respect. Respect for the local culture, the local traditions, local beliefs. The first step in this direction is to learn as much as you can about the culture and rituals of the country that you are going to visit before leaving your own.

An easy and generally speaking much appreciated way of breaking the ice with the locals is to greet them in their own language. Learn a few words like "Hello", "Good morning", "How are you", "Thank you" or "Bye bye" and use them when meeting them. They will open up to you and the interaction will be immediate with big smiles and welcoming gestures.

Learn to greet them, remember that SE Asia people are not prone to contact, so shaking hands is not the way to introduce yourself. A respectful bow, with your hands pressed together at the chest level is the correct way to say hello or to get to know new people.

Keeping your tone of voice low and never losing your temper is also the best way to resolve conflicts. Regardless the situation you might be involved in, remember that personal dignity and appearances are the most important for locals. Never point someone with your finger, never make him losing his face or embarrass him in front of others. The best way out from an argument is to calmly explain your point and try to find a common solution.

At last, remember that you are visiting countries that are culturally very different from your own, with their own etiquette and taboos. Try to learn what is acceptable and what is not and behave accordingly.



How to dress in public

SE Asia cultures are generally very conservative, especially in rural areas. Dress appropriately at all times, but especially when visiting temples or any other place of cult.

Should you require to go any government office or embassy, long trousers and shirts for men, and shoulder and knees covered for women are often mandatory.

In cities and urban areas it is not appropriate to go around in bikini or bare chested (you wouldn't probably do so back home, so why doing it in another country?). In case of jungle trekking, don't forget to cover as much of your body as possible to avoid insect bites.

On the beach, going topless or nude is not accepted (and often illegal). When visiting rivers or waterfalls it is recommended to keep your t-shirt when swimming.

In temples or in any religious site (mosque, churches, etc) both men and women should keep knees and shoulders covered and often shoes and hats must be removed prior to enter. As each site has its own rules, please check with your guide or at the entrance for guidelines. Note that also ancient temples and ruins are considered sacred and appropriate clothing and behavior is required when visiting those locations too.



How to behave

Tradition is very important across the whole region, with people often following centuries old customs. Some of the actions we consider normal, can be mistaken for a lack of respect and put you in awkward situations.

- Feet are considered the dirtiest part of the body. Never use them to point with them or sit with your feet directed at someone. Never show the sole of your feet or touch anyone with them.
- The head is sacred in most of the region, refrain to touch someone on the head (especially kids!)
- Never point your finger to someone, it's considered extremely disrespectful
- Always use both hands when offering a present (or even a business card) to someone
- Ladies are not allowed to interact with Buddhist monks, nor to sit next to them in any occasion, nor entering hindu temples during their monthly period.
- Be careful when handling religious artifacts, always ask what is the appropriate way of handling them.
- Try to avoid using your left hand, which in some cultures is considered as unrespectful. Always use your right hand.
- Don't talk about the Governments or Monarchies in a negative way, you can end up into serious troubles.
- Kissing in public, or doing anything more than holding hands, is considered inappropriate.
- Tipping isn't customary but it is appreciated, particularly by low-income earners like hotel and wait staff.
- When greeting someone in Malaysia, handshakes are generally acceptable for both men and women. If greeting a Malaysian woman, wait to see if she extends her hand first before offering to shake. Alternatively, one may put their right hand on their chest and give a slight nod to greet the locals.



Respect cultural and religious sites

At the time of Social Media is important to remember that religious and cultural site are sacred for the locals and need to be treated with the outmost respect.

Dress and behave appropriately, do not climb on monuments, temples or stupas, refrain to take pictures of people praying or performing rituals without their consent and do not perform acts that could be perceived as blasphemy.



Do not disturb monks, nuns and priests during their praying times and refrain to touch, hold or move sacred objects or offerings.

When entering a religious site, ensure that you follow the required regulations (i.e. some areas of the temple might be restricted to worshippers) and beware that men and women may have different sections and different rules to follow (such rules are normally written at the entrance, or ask your guide for help).

In Malaysia, but in general when entering a Muslim home or place of worship such as Mosques and Temples, shoes must always be removed. When visiting, wear modest clothing and best to cover your shoulders, and wear shorts and skirts that pass the knee. In certain places, robes and scarves (for female) are available for visitors to rent/use.

Taking Pictures

How would you feel if a complete stranger would enter into your house and start to take picture of you and your loved ones?

Be considerate when taking picture, ask permission, try to get a connection with your photo subject first, remember that these are real people living their life.

Be polite and always ask before taking the picture if they are ok with it, you will see that seldom they will refuse. Do not tip, nor pay, to take someone's photo, as this may encourage begging.



Interaction with children

It is important to remember that children are not tourist attractions. Panorama Destination, following the above statement, do not offer tours that visit orphanages or schools, as such visits can be harmful to the children.



Do not give money to begging children, as they are often exploited by the local mafia or their family. Should you want to support local communities, ask your guide for advice or get in touch with the Panorama Foundation.

If you ever witness a situation where a child seems to be in danger, please contact the closest police station or the local village authorities.

Climate

Sunscreen: Never underestimate the power of the sun at tropical latitudes. Summer or winter overexposure will burn you badly and do irreparable damage to your skin. Between the hours of 10am and 3pm UV rays (the ultraviolet rays that give skin damage or worse) are at their strongest.

Wear a hat, wear wrap type sunglasses with EPF10 (eye protection factor), wear a strong SPF factor water-resistant sunscreen. Reduce your exposure to the sun to short bursts. Permanent skin damage starts to occur after 15 minutes. The tropical sun is not to be trifled with, do not underestimate it.

Drink Water stay hydrated: tap water is not safe to drink. To avoid sickness, particularly diarrhea, drink bottled or boiled water. Keep yourself hydrated at all times. Bottled drinking water is available everywhere. Carry a bottle of water with you at all times.



Smoking Ban

By now there are at least 24 beaches in **Thailand** where it is forbidden to smoke. Rules for breaking the law are harsh – 100 000 Baht (3200 USD, 2826 EUR, 2455 GBP) or a jail sentence of up to one year. Other locations where it is forbidden to smoke in Thailand are:

- Temples
- Public parks
- Nightclubs
- Airports
- Restaurants and other Public venues



In **Indonesia**, smoking is prohibited on public transport and in the following public places:

- healthcare facilities,
- educational facilities,
- places of worship.

In other types of public places and in workplaces, designated smoking areas must be provided. With respect to outdoor places, children's playgrounds must be smoke free. Most restaurants also will not allow their customers to smoke inside. In hotels there are special assigned "smoking rooms". Once customers are caught smoking in a "non-smoking" room, a penalty will be charged to cover laundry costs.

VAPING

Vaping is illegal in **Thailand**. The maximum fine for vaping in Thailand is up to 10 years of jail sentence. It is real, harsh and you should take it seriously.

Although that e-cigarettes are openly available for purchase in tourist areas in **Indonesia**, and a number of e-cigarette cafes openly operate in Bali, vaping is banned in Indonesia.

Smoking and vaping are prohibited at all public places in **Malaysia** including restaurants, pubs and clubs, all open areas such as attractions, parks and pedestrian way and public transportation too. In hotels, kindly observed specific area for smoking (if available). Beginning of 2020, those found smoking in prohibited areas would be charged a compound of RM 250.00 (subject to change)

Asian Food

When travel to Asia, one thing that travelers cannot avoid is to eat the local food. If you are a food lover, Asia is home to many cultures, many of which have their own characteristic cuisine. The Asian cuisine includes a strong emphasis on lightly prepared dishes with a strong aromatic component that features such flavors as citrus and herbs such as lime, coriander/cilantro and basil.

While rice, tom yum, curry are common dishes, generally use coconut milk as their foundation. Using fish sauces for sauce and the inclusion of ingredients such as galangal, tamarind, lime and lemongrass. Asian food also displays through cooking methods also include a balance of stir-frying, boiling and steaming.

Most desserts are a sweet and sometimes filling snack opposed to a light and airy Western style dessert. They are characterized by sweet syrups, coconut cream, tropical fruits, and sweet sticky rice.



Food & Beverages

Part of enjoying a great holiday is of course trying the local food. The hygiene in (sub)tropical countries is sometimes less than in your home country. Please go through the below tips to reduce the chance for food poisoning.

FOOD

- Peel all fruits
- Be careful with raw or half raw meats or fish
- Be careful with raw shellfish
- Avoid sauces and/or desserts made from raw eggs.
- Wash your hands before and after each meal. If hand soap is not available, please use disinfecting hand gel.

DRINKS

- Do not drink tap water
- Tap water can be used for coffee and tea unless cooked well
- Avoid ice cubes made from tap water. Many restaurants and cafes make use of ice cubes made of mineral water which is safe to consume.



Consumer behavior

Shopping is surely an important time of your holidays, doing it in a sustainable way is a great way to support the local economy and to participate to the well-being of the visited communities.

Enjoy the negotiation and have fun bargaining but be fair. Remember that the seller is trying to make a living and what are for you small change, for him it could be extra food on the table.

When possible, buy locally made handicrafts from local market or directly from the producers. Beware of large shopping areas where prices are normally inflated and that often offer products produced in large factories.

Don't buy product made by animal (dead or alive)

Do not buy any product that includes wild animal parts or that are taken from the sea. Many animal-based items are illegal to trade, you may be stopped at the airport and fined.



Travel souvenirs

Be considerate and only shop for sustainable souvenirs, like:

- Any hand-made fabric based products (like cotton and silk clothes, bags, hats, traditional songket, batik and ulos),
- Traditional cosmetics made from local herbs
- Local spices,
- Silver and locally made jewelry
- Paintings,
- Wood carving and rattan/local leaves weaving
- Local tea/coffee, chocolate
- Coconut oil
- Locally produced wines/spirits
- Any type of locally produced traditional food snack



As a general rule forbidden items are:

- Religious items and especially Buddha images or sculptures
- Historical and antiques items
- Counterfeit trademark goods (i.e. watches, bags, etc)
- Ivory and animal carcass.
- Most of animal part based handicrafts
- Alive wildlife or flora
- Protected animal based snacks, like turtle eggs, shark fins, bird nest.



Do not support Sex Industry

Sadly this area of the world is famous for its sex industry. Not only as prostitution but also with a whole set of venues and shows that run around the “oldest job in the world”.

Most of those business are run by the shady underworld of local mafia and very often they are relying on human trafficking and poverty in order to recruit their staff. According to a number of reports conducted by different research bodies, there are an estimated 60,000 to 800,000 sex-trafficked children in Thailand alone!

Indonesia too has been struggling to address the grim issue of child sex trafficking. Although laws are in place to provide protection for children, there is still much work to be done in implementing these policies. In tourist hot spots such as Bali and urban centers are where trafficking and exploitation of children thrive. There are an estimated 70,000-80,000 victims of child sex trafficking in Indonesia.

Commercial sex work in any form is technically illegal in South East Asia. However, laws to this effect are often ambiguous and unenforced.

Beware of pedophilia as underage sex workers are very common. Violators can be prosecuted even after returning to their own countries.

Panorama Destination do no support those venues and do not encourage its guests to visit such type of venues and entertainment centers.



Drugs and Alcohol

The use of any illicit drugs in the region is strictly forbidden. The possession or consumption of even very small quantities may result in harsh punishment (from many years in jail up to the death penalty). Stay away from them.

The authorities in the region have a zero-tolerance policy for drugs (even for personal use) and those caught face lengthy prison sentences or the death penalty, usually after a protracted and expensive legal process. As an example, Indonesia has one of the strictest anti-drug laws in the world. A person caught with drugs such as marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine or methamphetamine for personal use can be sentenced to up to four years in prison or forced rehabilitation.

Alcohol drinking should also be done carefully, as often religious regulations forbid it. During the holy month of Ramadhan or during other religious ceremonies, the sale and drink of alcoholic beverages is forbidden.

Drink and driving is obviously not recommended, especially as taxis are very reasonably priced across all SE Asia.



Travel sustainably: Respect the environment

In Thailand alone convenience stores distribute enough plastic bags to cover the surface of 100 football field EVERY DAY! The same happens in the rest of SE Asia, so, let's do our part and avoid plastic bags and plastic straws as much as possible. Use re-usable refillable bottles for our daily water consumption.

We all like a clean environment, so do not litter in beaches and national parks, always bring back your waste and dispose it properly in the right place.

When trekking never feed wild animals and do not take any plants with you. Leave the environment as untouched as possible behind you.

When snorkeling, be aware that touching coral formations can hinder their growth - and note that coral cuts easily get infected. Do not take any coral or shell, dead or alive as it encourages locals to extract them on a wide scale for souvenirs.

If you smoke, dispose of the cigarette butts properly, do not throw them in rivers, oceans or on the ground.



Public Transportation and driving in Thailand

Seatbelts: Everyone is required to wear a seat belt in a bus, van or car. The fine for not carrying your seatbelt can be up to 5,000 THB p.p.

Taxis: Meter taxis are a very safe mode of transport and operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Presenting yourself with an air of confidence, knowing that most are metered although there are also set rate options depending on where you're travelling to. For example, in Bangkok, meter must start at 35THB and be prepared to get out and take another taxi if not. Don't engage the driver in unnecessary conversation. If needed, repeat your destination confidently, clearly, slowly, and politely.

Ride-hailing apps: In Thailand there one ride hailing apps: Grab (the Southeast Asian answer to Uber) and it is available in Bangkok and other major Tourist destination. As the communication with Taxi drivers could be at times difficult, using an app that mention your arrival destination can be a good solution. The use of the app also eliminate the possibility of scams and long detours and the need of bargaining for the right price.

Tuk-Tuk: It's part of the Thai experience to try a tuk-tuk at least once, however as a general rule, it's best to avoid them as a primary means of transportation. If you must use a tuk-tuk, unlike a taxi, you have to negotiate the fare to your destination first, and don't pay until your safe arrival. Do not let them take you to tailors, gem stores, or anywhere else that you didn't ask to go. Do not let them talk you into sightseeing, and other "special" sites. If a Tuk Tuk driver offers a fare below THB50 they will try to take you to other locations. A Tuk Tuk ride is a fun thing to do, but just let them know exactly where you want to go and tell them you'll pay THB50.

Songtaew (tourist truck): are used both within towns and cities and for longer routes between towns and villages. Those within towns are converted from pick-up trucks and usually travel fixed routes for a set fare, but in some cases (as in Chiang Mai) they are used as shared taxis for passengers traveling in roughly the same direction.

In Thailand, vehicles drive to the left hand side of the road and speed limits are expressed in kilometres per hour. Road signs are also expressed in both English and Thai.

Public Transportation and driving in Indonesia

Seatbelts: everyone is required to wear seatbelts in a bus, van or car. The fine for not wearing your seatbelt can be up to IDR 250.000 or 1 month imprisonment.

Taxis: Using taxi in Indonesia, works the same way it does everywhere else: you stop a taxi and off you go. The start tariff is IDR average 6.000 (is different per district) and the price will go up with (average) IDR 4.000 / km. Unfortunately, some taxi drivers are dishonest. Two favorite tricks are claiming to have a broken meter or taking the long way around. The blue taxis marked "(known as Blue Bird Taxis) are the recommended taxi's

Ride-hailing apps: In Indonesia there are two ride hailing apps: Grab (the Southeast Asian answer to Uber) and Gojek (the motorcycle taxi equivalent) are available in Bali and most districts of Indonesia. Many areas that are sympathetic to taxi drivers ban the entry of any Grab or Gojek-summoned rides. Before hailing a ride from an app, first find out if your destination will allow entry.

Car rental: In Bali you can have the benefit of driving your own vehicle to Bali's less-traveled destinations. Please note that Bali's traffic is both chaotic and dangerous. Get a car with a driver if you're not up to it. Notes: not recommended for newbie car drivers unused to Bali's chaotic driving conditions must be in the possession of an international driver license. Make sure you have an (travel) insurance which covers for accidents for both parties! Unfortunately, in case of an accident, the "tourists" will always be pointed as the guilty.

Motorcycle & Scooter Rentals: With the knowledge mentioned at the section of car rentals in your mind, renting a motorcycle is only an option if you're a really good rider. However, be a very defensive driver, make sure you have travel insurance, and be very, very careful out there. Notes: Must be in possession of international motorbike license. Bali's dangerous roads make this option absolutely not recommended for newbie scooter or motorcycle riders.

Becak: in some districts, especially in the city Jogyakarta it is possible to explore the city by using a becak. A becak is a three-wheeled pedal-powered bike with a passenger seat. Nowadays most of the becak are however motorized.



Emergency Numbers: Indonesia

Panorama Destination Jakarta

(Head Quarters)
Panorama Building, 5th floor,
Jl. Tomang Raya No. 63 – Jakarta Barat,
DKI Jakarta, 11440, Indonesia
Phone: +62 21-8082 0600

Panorama Destination Medan

Jalan Air Bersih, Number 55, Medan Kota
Medan 20218, Sumatra Utara - Indonesia
Phone: +62 61-7879 555
Emergency Phone numbers:
+6281260367880/
+6285275850047 / +6281361110008

Panorama Destination Labuan Bajo (Komodo)

Lobby Arcade Hotel Jayakarta Suites
Jl. Pantai Pede Km. 5 Labuan Bajo,
Flores Nusa Tenggara Timur
Phone: 0811381774
Emergency: 0811381774 & 0813 3892 4940

Panorama Destination Bali

Jalan Bypass Ngurah Rai No 620
Suwung - Denpasar 80228 – Bali – Indonesia
Phone: +62 361 726 800
Emergency Phone number: +62 813-1811-
5734

Panorama Destination Jogjakarta

Jl. LPMP RT/RW 007/002, Glondong, Tirto-
martani, Kalasan, Sleman, Yogyakarta, 55571
Phone : 0274 - 488 663. / 285 2052
Emergency Phone : Reservations : +62815 75
101 101 / General: +62877 3866 9663

Police - General Emergencies Tel: 110 / 112 (SMS 1717)

Ambulance and Rescue Tel: 118

Fire Tel: 113

Medical Emergencies Tel: 119

Tourist Police (Bali) Tel: (0361) 754 599 / (0361) 224 111

Tourist Police (Jakarta) Tel: (021) 526 4073



Emergency Numbers: Thailand

Panorama Destination Bangkok
62 The Millennia Tower, 17th Floor,
Langsuan Road, Lumpini, Bangkok,
10330, Thailand

Panorama Destination Thailand Emergency Contact

24-hour Customer Care: +66 (0) 91-787-6956

When in Thailand dial: 091 787 6956

For medical emergencies, you can also call these private hospitals in Bangkok for immediate help (All of these numbers are answered by English-speaking operators):

Bumrungrad Hospital - 02 667 1175

Bangkok Hospital - 02 310 3001

Samitivej Sukhumvit Hospital - 02 711 8191

Police – General Emergencies	Tel: 191
Ambulance and Rescue	Tel: 1554
Fire Department	Tel: 199
Medical Emergencies	Tel: 1669
Tourist Police	Tel: 1155
Bangkok Tourist Assistance	Tel: 02-281-5051
Pattaya Tourist Police	Tel: 038-429-371
Phuket Tourist Police	Tel: 076-225-361
Chiang Mai Tourist Police	Tel: 053-248-130



Emergency Numbers: Malaysia

Panorama Destination Kuala Lumpur
VO2 – 08 – 11, V Office, 2 Lingkaran SV,
Sunway Velocity 55100 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

Phone: +603 9226 9696

Panorama Destination Malaysia Emergency Contact
24-hour Customer Care: +60129296964
When in Malaysia dial: 0129296964

For medical emergencies, you can also call these private hospitals (All of these numbers are answered by English-speaking operators):

Gleneagles Hospital - (603) 4257 1300
Tung Shin Hospital - (603) 2072 1655
Prince Court Medical Centre - (603) 2160 0000
KPJ Damansara Specialist Hospital - (603) 718 1000

Police - Ambulance	999
Fire Brigade	994
Civil Defense	991
St. John's Ambulance	(603) 9285 1576
Red Crescent Society	(603) 4257 8726
Tourism Infoline	1300 885 776
Customs	(603) 87872312
Tourist Police Hotline (HQ)	(603) 2149 6590
Enquiries	(603) 2149 6593