

TRAVEL, TRAIN, FIGHT: MUAY THAI IN THAILAND

A Complete Guide To Training At
The Best Thailand Muay Thai Camps



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A complete how to guide to training at the best Muay Thai camps in Thailand

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- INTRODUCTION -

Traveling, training and fighting in Thailand is the ultimate dream of every Nak Muay. Being able to immerse yourself in a sport that you love can change the way you think and go about your training. Obviously, living in Thailand will grant you the opportunity to become a more complete fighter, but it will also allow you to grow as an individual and dramatically change your perspective on life.

Deep stuff, I know, but it's the truth.

That being said, I want you to understand what this guide is all about and who this guide is made for. I don't want you to have any preconceptions about it. I want to set you up for success as best I can. Before I get into who would benefit most from this guide, I want to explain to you who this guide *will not* help:

This guide *is not* made for the weekend warriors looking to go to Thailand for a week or two to train occasionally and party regularly. I have no problem if that is what you want to do and I'm sure you will still be able to pick up some very useful knowledge scouring this guide, but realistically, this guide is not for you.

This guide *is not* made for people looking to have a luxurious vacation and train in air conditioned, pristine Muay Thai gyms. First off, I'm not too sure if any of those gyms exist. Second of all, you miss out on the experience if you are living a life of luxury throughout your entire time in Thailand. I'm not saying you can't have a nice, air-conditioned room or splurge occasionally on high-end services, because everyone is entitled to spoil themselves once in awhile, but my main point is this:

Living, training and fighting in Thailand is *NOT* a luxury vacation.

If you are traveling to Thailand to party like it's your birthday every night or you want to live like you're on vacation every single day, this guide is *definitely* not for you.

Who is this guide made for then? Well, before I spoil the surprise let me explain something; going to Thailand to train Muay Thai is more than just becoming a better Thai boxer, it's about experiencing a different culture and living a humble life with purpose.

Believe it or not, living in Thailand is not always as easy and glamorous as some people make it out to be. Should you choose to travel there, you will constantly be encountering adversity and you'll be pushed out of your comfort zone on a regular basis. It might sound like I'm discouraging you from traveling to Thailand, but truthfully, it is these type of obstacles and challenges that are the key to getting the most out of your training and life in Thailand.

With that being said, this training guide is made for the serious Nak Muay looking to improve his or her own fitness, technique, *and* character. It's a given that being in Thailand will help your Muay Thai skills in more ways than one, but the most commonly overlooked benefit of living in Thailand is how the people, culture, and lifestyle can change your perspective on life and make you want to be a better person.

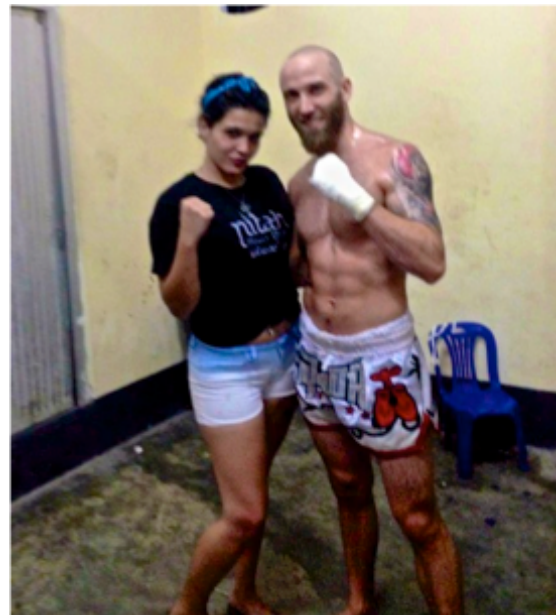
I don't want to sugarcoat anything though. There are plenty of distractions, scams, and dangers that you are inevitably going to come across during your stay. Not many people know this, but Thailand can easily suck you into a wormhole of temptation and unhealthy choices that will ultimately ruin you. In later chapters I'll be sharing with you the most common mistakes to avoid, and it's up to you to have the self-discipline and will-power to stay away from the dark side of Thailand.

So, are you serious about your training? Do you want to live, train, and fight Muay Thai as a lifestyle in Thailand? Do you have or want to develop a resilient mind, strong work ethic and focused discipline to reach whatever goals you set out for yourself? Then this guide was made for *you!*

- WHO I AM -

I can almost guarantee that you and I have a lot in common. I mean, you are reading my book about living, training, and fighting in Thailand, so we at least have that in common... but I bet there's even more than that.

Since you bought this guide, I know that you want to experience life on another level and become more than what society expects you to be. Instead of doing things that take you away from the reality of life, you want to experience life and live in the present moment. Instead of binge drinking on the weekends, watching mindless celebrity gossip shows on TV, and spending your downtime playing video games, you want to do things that make you grow as an individual. Am I right?



I was once caught in the trap of going through the motions of life and not having any meaning to my everyday activities. One of my favorite things to do was to hang out with my friends in my apartment. We would order pizza, smoke some ganja, and kill zombies on *Call of Duty* until our brains fried. Although it seemed like I was thoroughly enjoying blowing the heads off these Nazi-zombies, in the back of my mind I hated every minute

of it. I knew that I was completely wasting my time with mindless activities that wouldn't help me improve in any area of my life. It drove me absolutely insane.

At the time, I was training Muay Thai (along with some MMA and Jiu Jitsu), but I really wasn't taking it as seriously as I could. I knew that I had potential to be a great fighter, but that's all it was... potential. I had to break the routine of living a purposeless life, but how was I going to do it?

Well, I knew I wanted to fight, but I was having trouble getting matched up at the gym I was training out of at the time. I also knew that I really wanted to travel, explore and experience different cultures. After taking the time to really contemplate what I wanted out of life and doing some real soul searching, I knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to travel to Thailand and have my first fight.

I figured doing this would put me out of my comfort zone, especially since I would be traveling by myself to a foreign country, which I knew very little about. I also knew that the training and lifestyle changes would be a major shock to my system and would take some adjustments, but I was ready for the challenge. After saving up some money (and winning a good chunk in an online poker tournament), I did my research, bought my plane ticket and made the voyage to *"The Land of Smiles."*



Would you believe if I told you that going to Thailand was a life changing experience for me? Well it was, and it is not an overstatement by any means. The first three months I stayed in Phuket changed my entire mindset and the direction of where I wanted to take my life. Being able to train every day in beautiful weather was awesome, and training with fighters from Thailand, Australia, Europe and all over the world was an eye-opening, humbling experience to say the least. Not only that, but having my first 3 fights made me realize that Muay Thai was my cure to living a meaningless life. It sounds corny, but I truly became enlightened.

Since then, I've been back once and now, through hard work, dedication and a lot of sacrifice, I'm "lucky" enough to have the opportunity to live and train in Thailand full-time. I say "lucky" in quotes because even though I am very fortunate to be where I am in my life, I also know that I made my own luck through years and years of hard work, focus and preparation. Are you willing to put in the time and effort to live your dream?

Getting this guide is a great first step, but this is just the beginning. I'm going to supply you with all the information possible on how you can turn your dream of living, training and fighting in Thailand a reality. Through my own personal experiences, interviews with expats living the dream in Thailand, and endless hours of research, I am 100% confident this guide will supply you with all you need to know about life as a Thai boxer in Thailand.

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" - Lao Tzu

It's great that you've already taken the first step, but there is a long way to go before you reach your final destination.

- HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS GUIDE -

This guide is long, detailed and can be overwhelming at times; however, learning how to use this guide to its fullest potential is key to reaching your potential. Whether you want to travel to Thailand for a few weeks or try to make it a permanent residence, there are certain things you need to know before making a commitment.

First off, the most important thing you can do is *take notes*. Or you should at least highlight the important content that you will need for a later date.

Chances are you won't need all the information in this guide all at once. For example, although it's important to understand how to obtain a visa, how to renew your visa and everything that goes along with it, you won't really have use for that information until the time comes to get your visa. In that case, highlight it or jot down some notes so when the time comes to apply for your visa, you already know how to do it.

Secondly, do the exercises and follow the advice. Some of the written and mental exercises might seem meaningless and a waste of time, but they will help organize your thoughts and plans so that it makes the process seamless and much less stressful.

You also have to be sure to do your own research as well. even though my goal is to make this guide the ultimate resource for everything related to traveling, living, training, and fighting in Thailand, there are still plenty of forums, blogs and other resources that can be very useful to you along your trip. Fortunately, since I'm making this guide totally badass, I will share with you additional resources that you can use to find out even more about life in Thailand.

Lastly, you need to *commit*. I might've lied when I said that taking notes is the most important thing you can do because committing to your journey is actually the most important. If you don't make a commitment to yourself and your goals then all the note taking you do and advice you read will be a waste of time. However, if you make the decision to *commit* to making the voyage to Thailand to start (or continue) your Muay Thai journey, you have a much better chance to make it happen.

- SETTING EXPECTATIONS -

"A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination, and hard work" - Colin Powell

This is not an overnight success guide. This guide is made for the people who know that anything worth having in life takes hard work, dedication and sacrifice. If you were hoping that this guide would supply you with some sort of magic recipe that will allow you to start a life in Thailand tomorrow, you're going to be very, very disappointed.

Some of what I'm about to say might be a smack in the face, but it needs to be said. There are way too many people in this world who think that success and living your dream comes easy, and that couldn't be any further away from the truth. In order to live, train and fight in Thailand, you are going to have to make some hard choices, stay persistent through tough times, and sacrifice a lot more than you think.

First of all, if you are serious about your Muay Thai training, then you already know how much time, effort, and hard work you have to put into your craft. There are no short cuts to being a great fighter, just like there are no short cuts to reaching your goal of moving to Thailand.

If you are new to Muay Thai, reaching your goal will most likely take longer than someone who has been training for years. As a beginner, you still have a lot to learn, but don't let that deter you from starting a plan to travel to Thailand. Will you be able to land a sponsorship as a fighter and live in Thailand full-time? No. But that doesn't mean

that you can't make your own side income to travel and train full-time. Even if you couldn't bring in enough money right away, you can still save up enough money make the journey over to Thailand to learn more about the fight game and possibly have your first fight... that's what I did!

On the other hand, if you have been training Muay Thai for awhile now and have a few fights under your belt, then the chances of you being able to live, train, and fight in Thailand full-time is a little bit higher than someone who has never fought before. That being said, it will still take some extra work to learn how to market yourself properly so you are able to land a sponsorship that will cover your living and training expenses.

I'm not gonna lie. Whether you are a complete beginner or seasoned fighter, it's going to take an *insane* amount of work and there will be obstacles trying to derail you from living your dream, but it will make it that much more worth it when you do.

One of the most important concepts to ensure you reach your goals is to *think positive*. It sounds corny, but science has proved that optimistic thinkers have a much higher percentage of accomplishing their goals than those who constantly drag themselves down with self defeating thoughts.

"The man who thinks he can and the man who thinks he can't, are both correct" - Confucius

It may seem like developing a positive mindset is super simple, but it's not. Like I've mentioned numerous times already, you are going to run into your fair share of adversity. Whether it's personal problems with the significant other, a serious injury from training, getting laid off from your job, a death in the family, or a number of other possible obstacles that can slow down your path to Thailand, you have to learn how to look at them in a positive light.

Meditation, saying positive affirmations, reading happy stories, watching uplifting documentaries, and surrounding yourself with like-minded, positive people are just some of the ways to develop a positive mindset. However, even doing all these things can be trumped by a catastrophic event that can easily change your mindset from happy-go-lucky to miserably hopeless. It's up to you to make the best of the situation, no matter how tragic and dark things may seem.

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe." - Anatole Francis

Even if you get as far as moving to Thailand, there are bound to be unforeseen challenges that arise. I bet that almost all the stories you have heard or read about living, training, and fighting in Thailand are the happiest stories ever and they very well could be. But, there are also stories that you haven't heard that might make you think twice about a life in Thailand.

For instance, although I love Thailand and it has been a major source of my happiness, I have had my moments where I was depressed, anxious, and incredibly sad, even though I was living in paradise doing what I love. Some people might call me a little bitch and tell me to man the fuck up, but until you've experienced the darkness yourself, it's hard to understand.

Simply put, my mind wasn't right before making my second trip over and I paid the price with a less than ideal experience. Although I had my days where I was thoroughly enjoying life and trained my ass off, I still had negative, defeating thoughts in the back of my mind... trust me, it was no way to live.

Through that experience (and plenty others outside of Thailand) I've learned that you have to hope for the best, but prepare for the worst. If you are prepared for the setbacks that are inevitably going to happen, then you are much more likely to get past those roadblocks and continue your journey without being sidetracked. Shit happens, so be ready for it.

So, are you ready to take that next step? Are you mentally prepared for the ups and downs that are bound to take place during the journey? Do you believe that you have what it takes to make your dreams a reality? Then let's get to it!



- CHAPTER 1: PLANNING -

Now, the fun part starts! But before we get into the actual planning, there is one important question you need to answer in order to plan out the perfect trip to Thailand -

Why do you want to live, train and fight Muay Thai in Thailand?

Although this question can be answered in a million different ways, the most important answer is the one that you come up with *right now*. Take a step back and really contemplate why you want to make this life-changing trip. Your answer will have a major effect on how you go about planning your trip.

Do you want to have your first fight to see how you react in the face of adversity?
Do you want to train alongside your favorite Thai fighters to learn their training secrets?
Do you want to fight at one of the legendary Muay Thai stadiums?
Do you want to live and train in paradise while experiencing everything there is to the Thai culture?

Whatever your reason is, make sure it is genuine and it is what you truly want. The person who wants to have their first fight and live in a tropical paradise is going to plan a much different trip than someone who wants to train alongside top Thai fighters and eventually fight at Lumpinee Stadium. Needless to say, figuring out your priorities is the first step to planning a successful life in Thailand. The second step, is setting goals.

- THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING GOALS -

For those of you who have been a fan of Muay Thai Guy and have been following my fight career, you would know how important goal setting is for me. Without goals, I would have nothing to strive for and I wouldn't push myself to become a better fighter each and every day. They give me a clear direction to focus my daily actions so I'm not just going through the motions of everyday life. Without goals I wouldn't have won my championship titles or gotten to where I am at in my life and career.

If you create a vision for what you want out of your life and trip to Thailand, you are much more likely to be happier, more productive, and more focused than if you went without any clear goals. You might have some ideas for what you want to accomplish while you are in Thailand and *right now* is the time that you are going to make those goals real by **writing them down**. But before you do that, you have to make sure they are SMART goals.

S (Specific) - If your goals are general and vague, it will be easy to not take them seriously. The more specific and detailed you make your goals, the more likely they will stick in your head and keep you motivated during the days you feel like crap.

M (Measurable) - If your goals aren't measurable it is impossible to know if you are making progress with them. Keeping track of your progress is going to help you hold yourself accountable, stay on track, and experience the feeling of achievement when you hit certain milestones.

A (Attainable) - Being realistic isn't always fun, but if you were to set lofty, nearly impossible goals, it can crush your confidence if you don't reach it. That being said, you don't want an easy goal that won't mean anything when you reach it, because what's the fun in that? This is probably one of the most difficult aspects of creating a SMART goal because you need to find the balance between unrealistic, near impossible goals and boring, meaningless, easy to achieve goals.

R (Relevant) - Whatever your goals are, they have to be relevant to whatever it is you are doing. Since you are reading this book on traveling, training, and fighting in Thailand, it only makes sense to set a goal that is related to that!

T (Time bound) - Making a commitment to a deadline is a great way to stay focused and constantly be working towards your goals in the days leading up to that specific date. Having a set date to accomplish your goals will keep things in perspective and help avoid distractions knowing that you only have a set time to accomplish your goals.

To give you some examples, here are some **not-so-SMART** goals:

I want to live in Thailand for a long time to improve my Muay Thai and have fun.

I want to travel to Thailand and train at as many gyms as possible and fight as much as possible.

I want to become a more well-rounded fighter and one day fight a Thai opponent.

And now, here are different versions of the previous goals as **SMART** goals:

I want to live in Thailand for two years while improving my clinch sweeps, roundhouse kicks, and counter punches. In order to see my progress I want to fight at least once every two months and keep track of my improvements through a daily training journal.

I want to travel to Thailand in January 2016 to train at Sinbi Muay Thai in Phuket, Lanna Muay Thai in Chaing Mai, Fairtex in Pattaya and Sitsongpeenong in Bangkok. At each gym I want to train at for at least two months and win at least 1 fight.

I want to round out my game by improving my footwork and kicking techniques so I don't count on my boxing to win fights. I want to test my skills and beat a top-ranked Thai opponent at Lumpinee Stadium by September 2017.

Can you tell the difference between the two types of goals? Now, it's your turn. Keep in mind that your goals don't have to be anything like the examples I listed above, they just have to be SMART. Do *NOT* skip this step. This will have a major influence on your future decisions and help you streamline the process of planning your trip. So stop whatever you're doing and pull out a pen and paper to answer this question:

What are your top 3 goals for living, training, and fighting in Thailand?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

If you are more interested in SMART goals, there is a whole book on which you can [check out here](#).

- CHOOSING A GYM -



Training at the right gym can be the difference between loving and hating your life in Thailand. Of course, this will also be dependent on your goals as a fighter and whether or not you want the serious hardcore training grind or a more laid-back feel. When it comes to choosing the right gym, there are a few important factors to consider:

TRAINING ATMOSPHERE

If you are like most people who are serious about their Muay Thai, then chances are you're going to be spending a majority of your time at the gym. In this case, it's going to be vital to find a gym that has a friendly, positive, and motivating atmosphere for you to train in. If you feel unwelcome or rejected by the trainers and fighters, you are much more likely to skip out on training and make excuses to why you can't train.

Obviously, it is going to be hard to get a feel for the atmosphere of a gym when you can't go there yourself, however, if you find some pictures, videos, and reviews of gyms then, you can get a much better idea for what to expect. Generally speaking, most gyms that cater to tourists are going to be friendly since they want your money, but there is more to picking a gym than just its atmosphere.

QUALITY TRAINERS

There is a lot of truth in the saying "your training is only as good as your pad holder." Without a solid trainer you could very easily pick up bad habits, miss out on learning key techniques, and see little to no improvement whatsoever. Unfortunately, everywhere you go there will be bad trainers, so learning how to speak up for yourself to make sure you get the best trainer possible will be important.

When doing your gym research, make sure to take into consideration who the trainers are and what their experience level is like. That being said, it's not always important that the trainer has hundreds of fights because some of the best trainers have little to no ring experience at all, and some of the worst trainers could have been fighting since they were 6 years old. Be willing to ask around (via email and forums) about the trainers at the gyms you are considering going to, otherwise you might end up with an unmotivated trainer who could end up being detrimental to your training.



QUALITY TRAINING PARTNERS

Having training partners who motivate you and push you every training session is vital to getting the most out of your training. Without other fighters going through the grind alongside you, it's much more likely for you to get into training slumps.

Besides the motivational factors, training partners also can be huge in helping you improve your technique with sparring and clinching, which will prove to be very important for when you decide to step into the ring.

To find out what kind of training partners you'll run into at certain gyms; ask around on forums such as muaythailand.com to see where and when other fighters are going to the gym of your choice. Also keep in mind that you might be training with a lot of Thais, as well. If you pick a primarily Thai gym, then chances are you will have more than enough training partners who will have their fun tossing you around in the clinch and sweeping you during sparring.

AREA OF THE GYM

Another important factor that many people overlook is the area in which the gym is located. Is it around town or a far drive away? Is it near grocery stores or is it a long taxi ride to find food? Ask yourself these types of questions when you research your gym because it will affect your daily transportation budget and what you are able to do outside of training hours.

Also, consider about whether or not the gym is nearby any tourist attractions or scenic views you'd like to check out. It's nice to get out of the training grind every now and then to check out the beautiful country whether it's beaches, jungles, lookout points, tourist attractions, local shops, restaurants, temples, or markets. Even though one of your priorities is to train as much as possible, you'd be doing yourself a disservice if you don't experience more than just the Thai boxing in Thailand.

COST

Obviously, the cost will have some kind of influence on your decision, but don't let it be the main factor. If you truly want to get the most out of your training and overall experience while you're in Thailand, don't settle for training at a gym that you think won't meet your standards. Paying the additional costs to train at a quality gym will be well worth the investment when you come back to your home country a more polished fighter with tons of amazing stories to tell.

GYM EQUIPMENT

Although gym equipment is important to a lot of fighters, don't let it turn you away from gyms that have crappy equipment. Many of the gyms with old school, rundown equipment are known for developing top fighters on the regular!

Most of the training you should be doing will consist of running, shadowboxing, pad work, bag work, clinching and sparring anyway, so if your gym doesn't have the latest and greatest training equipment it shouldn't deter you from training there. Personally, I love the old school gyms that are made from spit and sawdust, it gives it more a hardcore, traditional feel... but that could just be my preference.

As long as a gym has good trainers, training partners, and a couple heavy bags, that's really all you need!

- FINDING REVIEWS ON MUAY THAI GYMS -

I have only trained at a handful of gyms here in Thailand, so it wouldn't be fair if I were to recommend or review gyms I didn't spend time at. The best way to get an idea for what a gym is like is to do your own individual research to see what other people have said about their experiences there.

Fortunately, there are a plenty of places to find reviews of Muay Thai gyms online. Taking your time to research and read about previous experiences at gyms will give you a good idea for what to expect. Doing your own independent research is one of, if not *the* most important thing you can do when planning your trip, so now is not a time to slack!

Here are the top websites for researching gyms that I'd recommend checking out:

muaythailand.com - One of the go-to places online for nak muay who happen to be traveling or currently living in Thailand. There are a ton of reviews on the most visited gyms and you should be able to find a good amount of info on most gyms. Also feel free to post a discussion if you have any questions about a certain gym and you will most likely get a response.

muaythaicampsthailand.com - This website supplies you with a detailed list along with reviews of a majority of the gyms in Thailand. They break down the history of the gym along with costs, training info, location, and a handful of photos too.

sherdog.com - In the Muay Thai/kickboxing section of the forums you can find some decent reviews on Thailand training camps. Although they are more scarce to come by than the previous two sites I mentioned, it's still worth looking through. Also consider asking around in the forums as well and you'll most likely get a quick response.

tripadvisor.com - Although this is not a site dedicated to Muay Thai like the other sites I mentioned, it still has a solid bunch of reviews on many of the Thailand training camps. Another reason this site is good to check out is because it also gives you ideas for what type of attractions, restaurants, and scenery is around the same area.

fightpassport.com - Bill has been all over Thailand and has trained and reviewed a high percentage of training camps all around the country. Although he started his blog in the early 2000s, a lot of his tips, reviews, and advice still ring true to this day.

Once you figure out a couple of gyms you'd like to train at make sure to do further research by checking out their websites and googling reviews from other Nak Muay who have trained at their gym!

- LIST AND LINKS OF GYMS IN THAILAND -

Below is a list of many of the Muay Thai gyms in Thailand you might want to consider training at. Although these are not all of the camps in Thailand, this list will give you a good foundation to base your decision off of. Take your time and do your research!

BANGKOK

[13 Coins](#)
[96 Penang Gym](#)
[Banchamek Gym](#)
[Chacrit Muay Thai School](#)
[Chuwattana Gym](#)
[Elite Fight Club Bangkok](#)
[Eminent Air](#)
[Fairtex Bangplee](#)
[Fighting Spirit Gym](#)
[Jitti Gym](#)
[Kaewsamrit Gym](#)
[Keatkhamtorn Gym](#)
[Khanomtorn Gym](#)
[Kiatphontip Gym](#)
[Khongsittha Muay Thai](#)
[Lookprabat Gym](#)
[Lukbanyai Gym](#)
[Luktupfah Gym](#)
[Master Toddy's Ultra Fight Gym](#)
[Meenayothin Gym](#)
[Petchyindee Academy](#)
[Poptheeratham](#)

[RSM Academy](#)
[Saengmorakot Gym](#)
[Sasiprapa Gym](#)
[Sitmonchai](#)
[Sitsongpeenong](#)
[Vithawat Muay Thai](#)
[Yongyut Gym](#)

CHIANG MAI / PAI

[Burklerk Gym](#)
[Charn Chai Muay Thai \(Pai\)](#)
[Chay Yai Gym](#)
[Golden Triangle International Martial Arts](#)
[Hong Thong Muay Thai Gym](#)
[KC Muay Thai](#)
[Lanna Doi Modt Hill Camp](#)
[Lanna Muay Thai](#)
[LEX Thai Boxing](#)
[Por Silaphai Gym](#)
[Rose Gym \(Pai\)](#)
[Sangha Muay Thai](#)
[Santai Muay Thai](#)
[Sit Thaharnaek Muay Thai](#)
[Sitjomthong \(Muay Thai Academy\)](#)
[Sor Wisarut Muay Thai \(Pai\)](#)
[Team Quest](#)

HUA HIN

[Chok Dee Gym](#)
[Por Promin Muay Thai Camp](#)
[Sitjaopho Muay Thai](#)
[WT Muay Thai](#)

ISAAN

[Banchamek Gym](#)
[Kiatmoo9 Gym](#)
[KRS Muay Thai Gym](#)
[Legacy Muay Thai](#)
[Lookchaomaesaitong](#)
[Paw Phrommanon Gym](#)
[Sitbunmee](#)
[Sit Nung Ubon](#)

[Sor Sumalee Gym](#)

KOH PHANGAN / KOH TAO

[Arena Muay Thai](#)

[Chinnarach Gym](#)

[Chorenrit Muay Thai](#)

[Diamond Muay Thai](#)

[Horizon Muay Thai](#)

[Island Muay Thai \(Koh Tao\)](#)

[Jungle Gym](#)

[Kobra Muay Thai](#)

[Monsoon Gym \(Koh Tao\)](#)

KOH SAMUI

[Jun Muay Thai](#)

[Lamai Muay Thai](#)

[Maair Muay Thai](#)

[Samui Fight Camp](#)

[Superpro Samui](#)

[Wech Pinyo Muay Thai](#)

[Yodyut Muay Thai](#)

KRABI

[Ao Nang Kitti Muay Thai](#)

[Ao Nang Stadium Gym](#)

[Emerald Gym](#)

[Lanta Gym](#)

[Muay Thai Missions](#)

[Yingyai Muay Thai](#)

PATTAYA

[Cho Nateetong Thai Boxing Camp](#)

[Fairtex Pattaya](#)

[Golden Glory](#)

[Pattaya Kombat Village](#)

[Pattaya Muay Thai Academy](#)

[Sitjaioetch Muay Thai](#)

[Sityodtong](#)

[Sor Klinmee](#)

PHUKET

[AKA Thailand](#)

[Bangrajun Muay Thai](#)

[Chang Muay Thai](#)

[Dragon Muay Thai](#)

[K.Y.N Gym](#)

[J Prapa Muay Thai](#)

[Lion Muay Thai](#)

[Maximum Muay Thai](#)

[Manop Boxing Gym](#)

[Nongnapat Muay Thai](#)

[Nitah Muay Thai](#)

[Patong Boxing Gym](#)

[Patong Stadium Gym](#)

[Phuket Top Team](#)

[Rawai Muay Thai](#)

[Rawai Supa Muay Thai](#)

[Sinbi Muay Thai](#)

[Singpatong Sitnumnoi](#)

[Sitsongpeenong](#)

[Sumalee Boxing Gym](#)

[Suwit Muay Thai](#)

[Tiger Muay Thai](#)

[Yudtajak Muay Thai](#)

- CHOOSING A LOCATION -

Location is most likely going to be the single most important factor in finding the perfect gym that fits your needs. Choosing the right location will have a major influence on your cost of living, atmosphere of daily life, quality of training, and amount of distractions that could stop you from reaching your goals.

You might already have an idea for where you want to stay or what gym you'd like to train at, or maybe you want to train at multiple gyms and live like a nomad throughout the country. Either way, knowledge is power and the more that you know about the provinces these gyms are located in, the more likely you are going to be able to enjoy yourself, save money, and get the most out of your training.

The following chapter is going to outline six of the main areas where the top Muay Thai gyms are located. Here are the six categories I'll be breaking down for each area in Thailand:

MUAY THAI CAMPS

Just because a Muay Thai camp is heavily marketed does not mean it's the gym for you. More often than not, the camps that have the most prominent internet presence also have the most people coming to their camps to train, which is a good and bad thing.

It's good because you'll meet a lot of new people and get to train with all different levels of nak muay.

It's bad because you'll most likely get much less individual attention than if you were to train at a lesser known camp that doesn't focus primarily on the numbers they bring in.

Like I've repeated plenty of times already in this guide, make sure you take the time to do your research by reading reviews and asking advice from people who have trained at the gym your considering. I'm not trying to scare you, but in order to get the most out of your time in Thailand you want to make sure the gym you train at fits all of your wants and needs!

RECOMMENDED GYMS

Although I haven't trained at a majority of the gyms in Thailand, I figured I would share my input on some of the gyms I have either trained at, researched, or heard about from other friends and fighters. Do not let my suggestions stop you from doing your own research or exploring other options!

COST OF LIVING

Your budget will be a major factor in deciding what kind of living conditions you will end up in. The province you choose to stay at will influence your costs and final decision, as well. Generally speaking, though, if you are on the higher end with your budget, you should be able to easily find a place that fits your needs. If you are on the lower end of the budget then you might have to deal with the fact that you'll be sleeping without air conditioning and in a less than luxurious environment.

All this being said, however, there are deals to be had regardless of what area you are in. One thing to keep in mind is that if you do your searching after you arrive in Thailand, you could easily find a more affordable place to live (although, that is not always the case). Another thing to keep in mind is that if you get the help of a local when doing your housing search, you are even more likely to find a great deal.

FOOD

Anywhere you go in Thailand you will save money by eating Thai food rather than western food. For most areas, Thai food costs anywhere from 40 - 150 baht, where western food is at the minimum 150 baht.

Also if you plan on staying in Thailand for an extended period of time, it might not be a bad idea to buy a tea kettle, hot plate, and other simple appliances to cook with. The initial investment might cost a little bit, but the amount of money you'll save by cooking your own food will definitely add up.

TRANSPORTATION

There are taxis almost everywhere you go in Thailand. These taxis tend to be a lot cheaper than taxis in places like New York City, but can still hurt your wallet if you're not careful. Other than that (depending where you live) there are other forms of transportation like busses, tuk-tuks, songthaews, and railways. But by far the most common way of transportation in Thailand is definitely the motorbike.

When you first arrive, you will be surprised to see that there are basically no road rules to abide by and you might even be lucky enough to see a whole family of five Thais squeeze onto one little motorbike. Chances are you will also see people weaving in and out of traffic without any hesitation and driving on the other side of the road to pass cars and busses. It's insane!

Even though motorbikes are cheap, relatively easy to maneuver, and extremely convenient, they are also very, very dangerous and one of the leading causes of death in Thailand. If you've never ridden a motorcycle or motorbike before, do yourself a favor and use a different form of transportation to get around. Maybe even rent a car. Naturally, renting a car will be more expensive, but it's going to be a lot safer than whipping around on a small piece of metal that you've never had experience driving before.

The road death toll in Thailand is one of the highest in the world, probably because they drive like possessed maniacs (no exaggeration). Don't be stupid and become a statistic. Even if you were to survive a spill, you better hope your travel insurance (if you decided to get any) helps covers the medical bills and damages of the bike, but I wouldn't count on it all being covered.

Also, make sure you read about and are aware of the [common motorbike scams](#) that I go over in a later chapter. I know of plenty of tourists who have had their trips ruined because of either accidents or scams, so just be aware of the risks of riding a motorbike.

Okay, I'm done scaring the shit out of you now. If you still decide that you are going to rent or buy a motorbike, then that's up to you and I respect your decision. I can't even blame you because that's what I do too, but I do have previous experience owning a motorcycle that I drove around without any issues (except one time I hit a deer at 70 mph and somehow survived without a scratch). With that in mind, make sure you *ride with a helmet!* This isn't just for safety reasons either, it's so you don't get a ticket from the police that will put a small dent in your savings.

SHOPPING/ENTERTAINMENT

Chances are you will end up doing some kind of shopping and souvenir hunting during your time in Thailand. There will be plenty of pretty, shiny things that get your attention, so make sure to set aside some type of budget for this type of spending!

Almost everywhere in Thailand (with the exception of malls and other corporate stores), you can haggle down prices for almost any item. If you take the time to learn some Thai and use it while trying to lower a price, you might be surprised how often the Thai vendor will give you a better deal since you are at least trying to speak in their native tongue.

QUALITY OF TRAINING

All gyms are different and your perspective is the most important factor in determining whether or not the training at a certain gym is quality.

Do you like intense, no nonsense training? Or do you like a more laid-back, go at your own pace type of setting? Determining what you consider a quality training session is a key factor in choosing the right gym and location.

GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

The province you choose to live in will have a major influence on the scenery, attractions, shopping and general vibe of the day-to-day life.

PROS AND CONS

Each province has its own advantages and disadvantages. You should weigh the pros and cons and determining what the most important factors are will be crucial in coming up with your final decision.

And although all of the locations will be thoroughly covered, I still encourage you to do your own research on the specific places you could see yourself staying.

- BANGKOK -

With the best training camps, stadiums and fighters being found in Bangkok, this is where you want to be if you truly want to challenge yourself and take your Muay Thai to the next level.

If you were to end up training at one of the many elite gyms in Bangkok, you will potentially be training alongside some of the top fighters in the world as well as getting instruction from the trainers who have helped develop these animals. Sounds pretty sweet, right?

Although Bangkok could very well be the ideal place to train for some people, there are some turnoffs that might push people away to the southern islands or northern countryside. The pollution, crowds, and political unrest are just some of the negatives to consider before deciding on Bangkok as a final destination to train. Ultimately, just like any other location, you'll have to weigh out the pros and cons to figure out if it's the best fit for you!

MUAY THAI CAMPS IN BANGKOK

The training camps in Bangkok are known as some of the best training camps in the world. Not only do you have the best fighters training out of these gyms, but you also have an unlimited amount of up-and-comers who are also trying to make a name for themselves by pushing through the daily grind of training.

Since top stadiums, such as, Lumpinee and Rajadamnern, are located in Bangkok, almost every fighter is putting in the time and effort to make it to the big show and fight at one of these legendary stadiums. If you want to have the opportunity to fight at one of these stadiums, Bangkok is definitely the place to be.

On the other hand, there are gyms that don't necessarily cater to tourists and can be a little rough around the edges. If you're looking for comfortable accommodations and a pristine training environment, training at one of the many elite Bangkok gyms might not necessarily be for you. Now this doesn't mean that all the gyms are old school, dirty gyms, but you shouldn't expect the same type of conditions as some as the highly marketed gyms in Phuket.

Another thing to keep in mind is that foreigners come into these gyms thinking that they have what it takes to live like a Thai and fight at the top stadiums. After a couple weeks or months of training they end up opting out once they realize how difficult the daily grind of training and life can be. Naturally gym owners and trainers at these top

gyms might be a little skeptical of investing all their time and energy in a foreigner when they've seen so many take the easy way out.

(If you want some real insight, make sure to [listen to my interview with Dorian Price](#) about how he lived and trained like a Thai during his time at Sitmonchai gym in Bangkok.)

That being said, there are plenty of gyms that offer training for beginners that are just starting off in the sport, so don't think training in Bangkok is just for elite professional fighters. Since it tends to be a more genuine Muay Thai experience, then if you were to train at a touristy camp, you can really learn a lot if you were to start your Muay Thai journey here.

RECOMMENDED GYMS

[13 Coins](#)

With one of the best reputations in the game, you can bet your ass you will get quality training over at 13 Coins. Not only do you have one of the legends of Muay Thai in Saenchai training there, but you also have young prodigy Sangmanee, who is only 15 years old and has already won titles at both Lumpinee and Rajadamnern!

You can expect 5 rounds of pads with a trainer, but don't expect to have your hand held when it comes to bag work, sparring, or clinching. If you are a hard worker and don't necessarily need someone pushing you day in and day out, then the laid-back atmosphere at 13 Coins might fit your personality perfectly.

[Eminent Air](#)

Although the costs of training here are some of the highest in Thailand (17,000 baht a month for 2x a day) it might be well worth the investment knowing that they are constantly putting out champion fighters. Not only do they pride themselves in having multiple champions in their name, they also are known for helping foreign fighters make a name for themselves in the ranks of the top stadiums.

[Kiatphontip](#)

With the owner being one of the most respected, recognizable foreigners in the Muay Thai scene, you can expect the training to be top level. Rob Cox has been living in Thailand and covering Muay Thai in the top stadiums for years, and now owns Kiatphontip in hopes to develop Thai talent to climb the rankings of the Bangkok stadiums.

With that in mind, the training is going to be intense, so if you plan on training here, don't show up out of shape. Since it's not necessarily catered to tourists, you can expect the training sessions to be long and grueling. Want to push yourself and improve each and every day? Then Kiatphontip might be your best bet.

Sitmonchai

Every foreigner I know who has trained at Sitmonchai speaks very highly of their time there, and for good reason too. With top fighters like Pornsanae, Thepnimit, and Yodkhunpon, you can expect the training to be quality and intense. Their trainers look after you and with help from ex-pat Abigail, you will feel more comfortable and at home than if you were to train solely at a Thai camp. If you don't believe me, listen to [Dorian Price's interview](#) where he thanks Sitmonchai for being such a great place to live and train.

COST OF LIVING

ACCOMMODATIONS

There is a wide variety of choices for accommodations in Bangkok that will highly depend on your budget.

If you want to live on site at the camp, chances are you'll be bunking alongside a few other fighters in a basic room with a mattress and fan. The cost of these rooms are usually pretty cheap per night and you might even be able to work something out if you were fighting for the gym consistently and giving them a cut of your fight purse.

Other than living on site, there are plenty of affordable apartments to be found in Bangkok. You can find furnished apartments for as little as 3,000 baht per month that offer the basic amenities like a bed, TV, fridge, shower, and toilet. If you're willing to spend a little bit more you can get an even higher quality living situation with better furniture, better location, and even a pool (if you're a baller like that). One of the best websites to find an affordable, nice apartment in Bangkok is en.9apartment.com

FOOD

You are in the city so of course there is going to be some awesome food! There will be plenty of options to choose from that range from western chain restaurants to high class Thai resorts to tasty, cheap street vendors that make amazing pad thai.

If you choose to eat at European restaurants that you are used to eating back home, you can expect to pay a little bit less, if not that same, than you would if you were to eat at them back home.

If you want to be frugal and spend around 30-60 baht for your meal, then, make sure that you keep an eye out for food stalls and small Thai restaurants where you see the locals eating at. Just like I mention multiple times throughout this guide, some of the cheapest and best food will be found by scouting out the area and seeing where the locals eat!

SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT

Being in a metropolitan area, you can bet your ass there is be plenty of shopping and sources of entertainment! If you're like me, this won't really be much of a factor in your decision since you'll be spending most of your time training, sleeping, and eating. But, if you're looking for things to take your mind away from training or souvenirs to send back home, you'll have plenty of options to choose from.

There are huge malls that have a variety of stores to do your shopping. Although the costs at Thailand malls will most likely be cheaper than shopping at malls back in your home country, you will get much better deals by haggling with vendors at night markets. It might be a pain in the ass trying to get a bargain, but it's very rewarding when you're able to haggle down a price and get a great deal.

As for entertainment, there is no short supply of go-go bars, movie theaters, markets, temples and other tourist attractions you can check out. If you need a night out away from the gym then you should have no problem finding something to do in Bangkok.

TRANSPORTATION

Unlike other places, where a motorbike makes sense to rent or buy, you are probably better off avoiding riding a motorbike in a busy city like Bangkok. The traffic can be crazy and with most drivers not following any road rules, you're much better off taking a taxi or other form of public transportation.

When it comes to using a taxi, you're going to want to always make sure they put on their fare meter. Although they'll try to bargain with you and get you to agree to a flat rate, chances are very high that the meter rate will be cheaper. If for whatever reason the taxi driver doesn't agree, you can get out and find another one of the thousands of taxis that will use the meter.

Besides taxis, there are also tuk-tuks patrolling the streets looking to rip off foreigners. Not only will they try to rip you off with your fare price, but they'll also try to drop you off at soapy massage parlors, gem stores, and other sketchy places where they'll get a commission for bringing you to. My advice would be to use any other form of transportation other than tuk-tuks.

If you want to try a different way of getting around then using either the skytrain (BTS), the subway (MRT), or taking a bus are your other options. Not only are these methods of transportation dirt cheap, but they are typically very clean, quick, and convenient too. It can be a bit stressful when you first start using it since you don't necessarily know how to get around, but after some practice it will be easier than dealing with a tuk-tuk driver.

[Click here for more detailed information on using the public transportation in Bangkok](#)

GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

It's city life so expect it to be crowded, busy, and stressful at times. If you like the fast-paced, vibrant environment of the city, then staying in Bangkok may very well be your ideal spot. With there being plenty to do like shopping, going to fights, eating at awesome restaurants, and experiencing the nightlife, you should never ever be bored!

Not to scare you, but one other thing to be aware of is the consistent political protests going on in Bangkok that have occasionally resulted in violence. Keeping up-to-date with what's going on in terms of political unrest is a smart idea if you want to be sure to avoid getting caught in anything potentially dangerous.

In terms of the training atmosphere, expect it to be a grind day in and day out. Unlike other areas like Phuket that cater to tourists, most Bangkok gyms are in the Muay Thai scene to develop fighters and showcase them at the top stadiums. If you want to take your training seriously and be surrounded by some of the best fighters and trainers in the game, then Bangkok is the spot for you.

PROS, CONS AND OVERVIEW

PROS

Best gyms, best fighters, and best trainers to train with.
Relatively inexpensive cost of living.
Plenty to do in terms of shopping and entertainment.
Easy, cheap public transportation.

CONS

Overcrowded and polluted.
Training and living environments can be tough for some foreigners.
Political unrest.

QUICK OVERVIEW

What else is there to say that hasn't been said? If you are 100% dedicated to making Muay Thai your life and want to the best training possible, then camping out at one of the many elite Bangkok Muay Thai gyms is your best option. Although it can be rough dealing with the daily grind of training, you'll be surrounded by motivated individuals who will help keep you focused on achieving your goals.

In terms of living conditions, you can get by just fine on a budget and live relatively comfortably. Living at the gym might be your cheapest option, but you can still find apartments for around 3,000 baht that have a bit more luxurious than a basic fan room at the gym. There is plenty to do and plenty to eat, and it's fairly easy to get from place to place.

If you can overlook the stressors, such as, the political unrest, traffic, and pollution, you can really benefit from staying in Bangkok and training at a top tier gym. If Muay Thai is your life, you want to be 100% committed to your training, and you can deal with living in a busy city, then Bangkok may very well be the best place for you!

- CHIANG MAI -

If you don't like the hustle and bustle of the big city or the over-priced tourist towns in Phuket, then Chiang Mai is where you want to be. The lovely city has a real authentic, small town feel to it and the people are some of the friendliest people you'll meet. Everything is as cheap as can be and you're bound to find amazing deals on quality accommodations.

When you venture outside the city center, there are some of the most tranquil and beautiful nature parks that you will ever come across. You might also have a chance to hang out with some hill tribes or bathe some elephants during your stay! Even though Chiang Mai isn't known as a touristy area, there are still plenty of things to do that you'll be able to brag about when (and if) you go home.

MUAY THAI CAMPS IN CHIANG MAI

There are a handful of gyms in Chiang Mai that have a good reputation and come highly recommended by students who have trained at them. The most popular training camps consist of KC Muay Thai, Lanna, Santai, and Team Quest. You can also choose to isolate yourself and escape to the hills of Thailand at camps like Lanna Doi Modt Hill Camp and Charn Chai Muay Thai.

Just like most places in Thailand, the training at most gyms will be exactly what you need. There will be a few exceptions, but for the most part, the quality of training in Chiang Mai rivals the other provinces in Thailand.

Considering most things in Chiang Mai are super cheap and affordable, some of the training packages can cost a fairly decent amount. With most gyms having their Muay Thai training packages ranging from 8000 - 10000 baht, you can expect that to be one of the biggest monthly expenses.

RECOMMENDED GYMS

[KC Muay Thai](#)

KC is another gym that comes highly recommended by many of my old training partners and friends. With the trainers taking the time to work with you and focus on your technique, you can expect to learn more than just a thing or two during your stay there.

With all the sessions being very organized and rather intense, you can expect to be pushed while improving your conditioning and technique.

Lanna Doi Modt Hill Camp

Want to get away from the crowd, noise, and distractions of everyday life and live in the hills of Thailand? Then training at this camp will be perfect for you! With no electricity and no hot showers and being situated two hours north of Chiang Mai in the mountains of Doi Modt, you can expect to be far away from civilization and be able to focus solely on your training.

Charn Chai Muay Thai

Cheap living, away from distractions, and quality training - that's what Charn Chai is all about. Located in Pai (about 100km north of Chiang Mai) you won't have too many distractions stopping you from focusing on your training. Not only that, but you will also have quality trainers with the most notable being Monkoldej Sitthepitak or "Bee", who has over 300 fights and has been ranked #1 at both Lumpinee and Rajadamnern. Although his credentials as a fighter are impressive, he also has a great resume as a trainer - he has instructed in Australia and Netherlands, so he obviously has a plethora of knowledge to pass on!

Sangha Muay Thai

Want a different take on Muay Thai? Well, if you decide to train at Sangha Muay Thai you will have a wide variety of training types and disciplines to choose from. Besides having a solid Muay Thai program, they also offer classes in Muay Thai chaiya, Wing Chung, Tai Chi, Krabi Krabong, and a whole range of other discipline.

COST OF LIVING

ACCOMMODATIONS

You can get by spending a very little amount of money and still find a decent living situation in Chiang Mai. Most of the hotels, hostels, and houses you'll find will be cheaper than almost anywhere else in Thailand (except for maybe remote locations like in Isan).

On the lower end of the spectrum? Some gyms might offer you free accommodation if you purchase a training package. That being said, it's super basic and will most likely consist of a mattress, a fan, and a room full of other fighters... but you can't beat free!

Looking for a more comfortable living situation?

You will be able to find shared hostels that are slightly more 'luxurious' than the simple mattress on the floor. There is a fair share of hostels around Chiang Mai and most of

them can cost from 100 - 200 baht depending on the hostel. So if you're looking to spend as little as possible, this is your best option.

Want your own private space? Do you want to go all out and maybe even get air conditioning too?! Well, you are just a straight-up baller then, huh? No worries, you still won't be spending that much since it will cost you anywhere from 3,000 baht a month to 8,000 baht a month for a nice living space. If you are a true baller and want to spend even more, the type of place you can get will be fit for a king (or a queen).

FOOD

Like anywhere in Thailand, if you eat Thai food, it is going to be the cheapest way to eat. Fortunately, eating Thai food in Chiang Mai is not only deliciously good, but it's as cheap as you can get! Most Thai meals run for a mere 30 - 60 baht, which is only about 1 or 2 bucks. Add a cheap fruit smoothie in for 20 baht and you'll have a full meal and drink for just a few dollars!

There are plenty of Thai restaurants and street vendors everywhere around the city as well as western restaurants. Of course these meals are going to cost a bit more than a traditional Thai dish, but they will still be cheaper than most other places in Thailand (around 200 baht).

Lastly, if you want to cook your own meals, then you will have no problem finding fresh ingredients to cook with. There are more than enough 7/11's and super markets around the city that have some snacking foods to eat between meals.

SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT

When it comes to entertainment in Chiang Mai, you have a decent amount of options to choose from. Besides the normal night out (which isn't nearly as crazy as places like Pattaya or Phuket), there are yoga studios, cooking classes, massage parlors, elephant camps, nature preserves, city tours, and buddhist temples to check out.

In relation to shopping, you'll be able to get your fix at the night bazaars, midnight markets, and walking streets that are located around the city. If you are a good haggler, you will be able to find some awesome deals on great souvenirs and clothing!

TRANSPORTATION

Getting around Chiang Mai is cheap and easy. Although there are plenty of places to walk, there obviously are going to be times where you need to take a longer trip where walking would be the last thing on your mind (especially after a hard training session).

First, you can rent a bike. Not a motorbike, but a bicycle. I know that this defeats the purpose of resting your legs after a training session, but if you are cheap and want to add some cardio to your training regimen then paying 20 - 80 baht per day is a great way to do that.

You could also rent a motorbike in Chiang Mai for around 3,000 baht a month and use that as your main source of getting around. It can be dangerous and stressful, but if you are confident riding a motorbike and are willing to take the risk then do your thing! Of course you will have to be careful of any scams and make sure to do your research on the rental company before choosing them. Check out forums at ThaiVisa.com to keep in the know.

Don't want to walk, bike, or scoot around on a motorbike? Then, taking a songthaew (pickup truck taxi) is only around 20 baht a ride and will take you most places around town. Longer journeys will cost a bit more at around 40 - 100 baht, but are still a great bargain.

If you are not into any of those previous options for whatever reason then there are tuk-tuks, taxis, and motorbike taxi's that you can hop on and haggle a price with. Make sure to settle on a price before taking off to your destination, otherwise you could very easily end up paying double what it should have cost!

GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

City life but with a small town feel.

Almost everyone I run into raves about how much they love Chiang Mai and how much they wish they could stay there longer and I have to agree. The people are some of the friendliest you'll ever meet, the training is high quality, the scenery is beautiful, and the streets are vibrant with life.

Although training will most likely be your priority, make sure to take some days off to visit the outskirts of the city to check out the scenery. There is a vast array of temples, mountains, waterfalls, and other natural wonders that you won't want to miss out on. You should also take the time to visit some elephant camps or northern hill tribes to delve even further into the Thai culture.

PROS, CONS, AND OVERVIEW

PROS

Very cheap living conditions.

City living with a small town feel.

Beautiful culture in the city and beautiful scenery outside it.

Quality training camps to choose from.

CONS

Smog and air pollution in earlier months of the year.

Not near any beaches.

Traffic can be annoying at times.

QUICK OVERVIEW

Chiang Mai is beautiful inside and out. The culture is still alive in the city center and although there are touristy things to do, it's not nearly as watered down as places, such as, Phuket or Pattaya. Doing other things than training is a must; otherwise you will be missing out on some of the most gorgeous landscapes and truly unique experiences in the world.

When it comes to the training, it is as good as you'll get in Thailand besides if you were to train at the top camps in Bangkok. You have a fair share to choose from so finding out that fits your personality best shouldn't be too much of an issue.

Don't like the big city? Don't like the touristy beaches? Don't have a lot of money? Want to save money? Want quality training? Want a cultural experience? Go train in Chiang Mai!

- ISAN -

The Isan Province is the largest region in Thailand, located in north eastern part of the country. A majority of the area is land where cattle, chicken, and water buffalo roam while farmers work tirelessly everyday harvesting resources like rice and rubber. Most Thai people in Isan have never laid their eyes on a foreigner, so if you find yourself there, don't be surprised when everyone stares at you when you're walking down the street.

On the other hand, there are cities like Udon Thani and Khon Kaen where it is more developed with hotels, malls, and internet cafes, so you won't feel as out of place there. Generally speaking, the Thai people you find in Isan are very friendly and welcoming since they see you as a mini-celebrity of sorts.

When it comes to training, there isn't too many options that you'll be able to find online, but there are a few. If you can't find a gym while scouring the web, chances are if you are able to ask a local (if you can speak some Thai) they will be able to point you in the direction of a "spit and sawdust" style of gym. Don't be surprised if there is a huge language barrier since you'll most likely be the only foreigner training there!

To get the best experience in Isan it's best to know a decent amount of the Thai language and make some local contacts who are able to share with you priceless information and tips on how to get by in Isan.

MUAY THAI CAMPS IN ISAN

By far the most recognizable and popular of the Isan gyms is Banchamek Gym - which is where the legendary Buakaw occasionally trains when he is away from the spotlight of the Muay Thai world. Unlike other gyms in Isan, this gym will cost a lot more than if you were to tread off the beaten and train at a lesser known gym.

Kiatmoo9 Gym is also in Isan located in the Buriram province. Although lesser known than Banchamek Gym, Kiatmoo9 is consistently nominated as one of the top gyms in Thailand and turns out top fighters like Singdam who has been "fighter of the year" as well as a multiple champion at Lumpinee Stadium.

In Ubon, you will find your fair share of gyms to train at which include Legacy Muay Thai, Sit Nung Ubon, Sor Sumalee, and a few others. Most gyms in the Isan area are very affordable and cheap compared to gyms in other areas of Thailand, so if you're looking to truly live and train like a Thai, Isan might be the perfect spot for you!

RECOMMENDED GYMS

Banchamek Camp

Many people come to the outskirts of Thailand to train at Banchamek Camp in hopes to meet and train alongside the legend Buakaw. Although he is there at times, he does split his time between the gym in Isan and the gym in Bangkok, so, if your main reason for heading to Isan is to train with Buakaw, make sure you find out when he is actually there first!

Since many foreigners come to see Buakaw, the prices are much higher than any other gym in the Isan area (or most areas for that matter). However, if you do want the experience of training with Buakaw then it might be worth the extra cash. Just remember that his gym in Surin, Isan is located in the countryside, so don't expect much else to do besides train!

KiatMoo9

This small town gym is consistently in the running for "Gym of the Year" in Thailand and can you guess why? Well, it might have to do with the fact that they don't get any fighters sent to them from Bangkok, yet, they keep producing elite level fighters like Singdam and Panomrunglek from scratch. Needless to say, their training sessions and trainers are going to be of very high quality!

COST OF LIVING

ACCOMMODATIONS

Houses and apartments are *SUPER* cheap in Isan. What would cost around 10,000 baht a month in places like Bangkok can be found for as little as 2,500 baht in Isan. Needless to say, your money will go very far here and chances are you will be able to live like a king if you have enough money.

If you are looking to live on the outskirts of town, you'll most likely be able to find a quality house with a beautiful view of the paddy fields, fruit trees, and farmland. You could also choose to live in a city center where there are plenty of go-go bars that could easily distract you from your training. That being said, if you have good self control and want to be closer to amenities then renting in town might be a better option.

FOOD

Some of the best and most unique food you'll ever eat can be found in Isan. The cuisine is a mixture of Lao, Thai, Chinese, and Vietnamese, so you'll find a wide variety of new foods to try out.

When it comes to traditional thai dishes - like pad thai or khao pad gai (chicken fried rice) - chances are they won't be as good as in other part of Thailand, but they will be a lot cheaper! A dish that costs 60 - 100 baht in Phuket might cost as little as 20 baht in Isan.

Do not expect too much western food, especially if you decide to live in the outskirts of town. The western restaurants that you do find are said to be top of the line in terms of quality and taste. However, more often than not, you will find yourself eating rice and noodles for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, which can be tough getting used to if you are a picky eater. Speaking of being a picky eater, you might not fit well in Isan if you are not willing to step out of your comfort zone and try some of the "other" foods that are offered like lizards, frogs, and insects... which are actually quite tasty!

There are also chain supermarkets like Big-C where you can do your own shopping if you want to whip up some of your own food. You can also find plenty of KFC and other fast food joints if you really wanted to, but why go that route if you are taking your training seriously and trying to have an authentic Thai experience?

The cost of all of these foods is ridiculously cheap, so, you should be able to feed yourself without any worry of overspending on your food budget.

SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT

Anywhere in Thailand you go you'll find some type of store or market to do some shopping. The major cities there are shopping centers and malls where prices are relatively low, but if you are in the middle of Isan away from the city center, don't expect to find much except for the occasional street vendor who happens to sell corn on the cob and t-shirts.

When it comes to entertainment, there isn't too much either. With most Thais migrating towards southern Thailand for work during high season, there isn't much work to be found in Isan. That being said, the country is surrounded by natural beauty and there are nature preserves you can explore.

TRANSPORTATION

Just like the rest of Thailand, the main source of transportation is motorbike which you can cost around 150 - 250 baht per day, or around 3,000 baht a month. If riding a motorbike isn't your cup of tea, you can rent a car from recognized names like Budget or Avis, which will give you fair prices. If you decide to rent a car, make sure you get insurance and a good map!

Since Isan is a large province, there are cheap buses (that are pretty comfortable for the most part) that run all around that area of the country. The bus tickets I bought for a 7 hour trip from Surin to Bangkok ran for about 400 baht, which is dirt cheap. You can also travel by train which is around the same price and can be booked through travel agents or at the stations themselves.

In larger cities, you will also find the infamous tuk-tuks which are cheap, but relatively expensive if you compare it to nearly any other form of getting around. Other than tuk-tuks, you'll also find pick-up trucks called songtaews which cost a mere 5 baht to ride but have specific routes (which can be confusing to navigate) and tend to drive with complete disregard of the road rules.

GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

Isan is one of the most rural parts of the country so you can expect a laid-back, slower pace of life if you live and/or train there. For the most part, you will be one of the very, very few farang wherever you decide to stay, so learning to speak a little Thai and getting used to being stared at constantly is a must.

The training in Isan will be different than the training in places like Phuket because it is not targeted towards tourists. The gyms in Isan give off a true "Thai-style" way of training and life that you won't find in some other areas. You will also probably have

solid training partners since most of them are Thai natives who live to fight and fight to live.

And although there are some western amenities in the major city centers, they are still pretty scarce when you wander out into the country. If you are comfortable with roughing it and eating cheap Thai food, you can get by on a very limited budget.

PROS, CONS, AND OVERVIEW

PROS

Super, super cheap in almost every aspect.
A traditional, Thai way of life and training.
Laid back atmosphere with plenty of beautiful countryside.

CONS

You'll be one of the only foreigners, and if you don't speak some Thai, daily life could be rather frustrating.
Not much to do outside of training.
If you're not comfortable with roughing it or stepping out of your comfort zone, it can be a miserable experience.

QUICK OVERVIEW

Everything is super cheap! The food is a bit different and might take some getting used to, but it's a good change of pace and forces you to step out of your comfort zone to try new things. Speaking of stepping out of your comfort zone, you could very well be the only foreigner for miles and miles, so learning some basic Thai is a must if you want to have interactions with the locals.

Training can be high quality if you find the right gym, but like mentioned earlier, it's likely that you will be the only westerner training with the Thai's. If this is something you would want to experience and if you think you'll thrive in that environment, then Isan might suit you quite well. If you like the comforts of home, eating western food, and being around other English speaking people, then you might want to think twice before booking a place in Isan.

I spent around two weeks in Isan and that was more than enough time for me to get the most out of my experience there. I enjoyed the training and lifestyle, but after a week, it got a little mundane since there wasn't much to do outside of eating, sleeping, and training. It was also tough not having any other westerners to talk to and socialize with, but that's the price you pay for staying there!

- KOH PHANGAN -

Even though Koh Phangan is primarily known for its epic Full Moon Parties, life on the isolated island is super laid-back and relaxing. I thoroughly enjoyed my time on Koh Phangan and felt that I was at my best and most productive due to the laid back way of life with very minimal distractions.

Like Phuket, Koh Phangan has gorgeous beaches, as well as, amazing lookout points to watch the sunrise and sunset on any given day. Unlike Phuket, Koh Phangan is not expensive, overcrowded, noisy, or touristy (with the exception if you are living close to the Full Moon Party when it is going on). Having your own private beach never gets old!

MUAY THAI CAMPS ON KOH PHANGAN

Since the island is so small, it's easy to test out all of the Muay Thai camps on Koh Phangan to see which one fits your needs best. All of them have their similarities and differences, but you can never go wrong testing them out for yourself to see what they are like.

I ended up spending my time primarily at Diamond Muay Thai and let me tell you, training with Mon (the head trainer) really made me take a step back to dissect and tighten up certain areas of my game. The atmosphere was laid-back, but intense, and the gym itself had everything you need for a solid training session.

Besides Diamond Muay Thai, Koh Phangan has a handful of good gyms to choose from including:

Arena Muay Thai
Chinnarach Muay Thai
Chorenrit Muay Thai
Horizon Muay Thai
Jungle Gym
Kobra Muay Thai
Pech Rung Ruang

If you are looking for a laid back way of life on a beautiful, secluded island, but still want quality training to constantly improve your game, then Koh Phangan is a solid choice.

RECOMMENDED GYMS

Diamond Muay Thai

If you happen to get Mon as a trainer, you will learn more than you can imagine. It can be demoralizing at times since he will completely breakdown your technique, but he

gives an impressive amount of detailed instruction that will make you take a step back and reassess your striking.

If you happen to stay at the camp in one of the small bungalows it will give you more of an opportunity to hang out with the trainers and other nak muay at the gym. Besides the training, the owners (Simon and Mon) are great guys who look out for your best interest and make sure you have a good time while staying on Koh Phangan.

Arena Muay Thai

If you're looking for quality training, but want to be able to blow off some steam during the full moon season, then Arena Muay Thai will be right up your alley. The gym is located in the heart of full moon central in Haad Rin and right nearby a handful of beautiful, sandy beaches. Besides being an ideal location to unwind, Arena Muay Thai also offers quality training at a clean gym for very reasonable rates.

COST OF LIVING

ACCOMMODATIONS

Living is *cheap* on Koh Phangan and you can get a great deal on a bungalow, apartment, house, or villa, depending on your budget. Look at it this way, for the same amount you would be paying for a single bed room in Patong, Phuket, you could easily have your own detached house near the beach in Koh Phangan!

With very little money, you can still have a quality living situation nearly anywhere on the island. If you were to book a hotel for a night (or even stay in a hostel, if you want to be really cheap) then ride around and check out houses and bungalows for rent, I guarantee you will find a great deal that will be hard to pass up.

On the cheaper side of the spectrum, you can find a rustic bungalow for around 300 baht a night and can most likely get an even better price if you were to stay there for at least a month. If you were to pay a little bit more, let's say 500 baht, you could find a mid-range bungalow on a resort or even a small separate house. Lastly, if you can, most likely, afford to pay 7,000+ baht a month, you can find a beautiful place to call your home for the foreseeable future.

My girlfriend Liz and I spent 13,000 baht for a small, air-conditioned house that has a beautiful balcony over a pond. It is only a minute walk to the beach, has a comfortable bed, full-service kitchen and is on the premise of a yoga and massage studio. You can [check out this video tour](#) to get an idea for what you can get for around \$450.

FOOD

There are nightly markets where the food is not only dirt cheap, but ridiculously good, too. Most nights you can head to one of these markets with 150 baht and feed your hunger in no time. With food ranging from traditional Thai food, Italian pizzas, banana pancakes and fruit shakes, there is a good variety to choose from.

When it comes to eating somewhere other than the markets, you can find great local Thai spots, where meals cost a mere 50 - 100 baht. If you wanted to eat a more western style dish, there are plenty of cafes and restaurants that you can choose from that will serve you sandwiches, pastas, and good ol' fashioned home cooking. If you can afford to spend a little bit more per meal (150 - 300+ baht) then you'll have no problem finding some tasty western food.

Also, here is a tip if you want to save even more money. Since Liz and I were spending a decent chunk on accommodation, we wanted to save money on food to balance out our spending. Since our bungalow had a kitchen, we were able to save money on breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks whenever by doing our own food shopping and cooking our own meals. If this is something you can see yourself doing, you can save a good chunk of change to use for massages or other aspects of your trip!

SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT

Since Koh Phangan is a destination for the full-moon party animals, there are plenty of places to do your fair share of shopping. With markets and small shops all around the island, there are many opportunities to find good deals on clothing, bathing suits, blankets, sandals, and a ton of other items.

In terms of entertainment, there are bars and nightlife areas on the island that can fulfill the needs of any partier. If you are on the island for the same reasons I am (for the calm, laid-back atmosphere) you will probably find more pleasure in some other forms of entertainment like massages, relaxing on beaches, or pool hopping at close by resorts.

Depending on how you like to spend your down time, you can choose from your fair share of quality spas, massage parlors, yoga studios, cooking classes, detox retreats, and dive schools. All of these tend to be fairly priced and top quality, but make sure to check out reviews on Trip Advisor or another travel website before dropping too much cash on a retreat or dive certification.

If you are looking to save money, there are still plenty of things to do and see. The island is a beautiful spot for people who enjoy lying out on the beach, climbing to scenic view points, or biking around town. One of my favorite things to do is grab my kindle or iPod and sneak into a hotel's pool just by entering from the beach side!

TRANSPORTATION

Like most spots, motorbike rental is going to be one of the cheapest, easiest ways of getting around the island. Unlike places like Phuket or Bangkok, Koh Phangan is not as crazy in terms of traffic, so renting a motorbike here is a bit safer. That being said, there are sandy, mountainous roads that could cause some trouble while you are driving. Other than that you should be able to navigate your way all around the island without much issue.

Another option is to rent a mountain bike anywhere from 50 - 100 baht a day. If you are near all the key amenities as well as your Muay Thai gym, then riding your bike around is a great way to save money and build up your cardio!

You will also be able to find songthaews (or pick-up taxis) that are dirt cheap and generally will cost you between 50 - 150 baht per ride. Make sure to agree to a price before you disembark otherwise you can be overcharged very easily. Don't expect to pay more than 200 baht unless you were to take a *really* long ride around the island, then it will obviously be a little bit more.

There are also motorbike taxis in limited supply, as well as regular taxis. The prices on the island are cheap compared to Phuket, and since there are only so many places to go, you shouldn't worry about spending too much money if you decide to take a trip around the island.

GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

Like I have mentioned numerous times already, Koh Phangan has a super laid-back vibe to it. The people tend to be very friendly and the pace of life is nice and slow. When the full moon party is going down in the south east corner of the island, it can get a bit crazy there, but if you stay away from that, it is as relaxing and quite as can be.

If you are trying to avoid the hustle and bustle of Bangkok and the overcrowded party scenes in Phuket or Pattaya, then Koh Phangan might be your dream location. Besides the atmosphere and Muay Thai training being great, there are also plenty of other ways to stay productive and improve yourself by taking yoga classes, detox retreats, diving courses, cooking classes, and much more!

PROS, CONS, AND OVERVIEW

PROS

High quality of life for a very minimal cost.

Away from noise, crowds, and distractions.

Relaxing atmosphere with plenty of additional ways to improve yourself.

Everything is relatively close together.

CONS

Away from the mainland.

Could be *too* laid back of an atmosphere.

Moon parties could be a distraction.

QUICK OVERVIEW

If you are like me in the fact that you are not a night owl who likes to spend time in bars or clubs, then Koh Phangan is a good place to be. Even if you do like the occasional party, the full moon, half moon, black moon, and whatever-moon parties that happen monthly will be more than enough to feed your need to rave the night away.

Your money goes very far here and you can very easily have a comfortable, quality home without paying an arm and leg. You will also be able to get around the island quite easily and without having to pay too much depending on your mode of transportation. And of course the food is also affordable, especially if you eat at the food markets that are spread out around most of the island.

I would recommend training in Koh Phangan to anyone because of how much I enjoyed myself there. That being said, I don't want Koh Phangan to get too crowded and super touristy like most of the spots in Phuket, so don't come here unless you *really* want to! In all seriousness though, the way of life here fits my personality perfectly, but the real question is does it fit *your* personality?

- KOH SAMUI -

Koh Samui is one of the fastest growing spots for tourists to visit and for Thai boxers to come train. With a variety of high quality Muay Thai gyms that cater to beginners as well as seasoned fighters, there are gyms that fit most people's needs. Along with breathtaking beaches, an easy-going way of life, and plenty of shopping and entertainment to check out, Koh Samui is becoming very popular, very quickly.

MUAY THAI CAMPS ON KOH SAMUI

The training camps on Koh Samui cater to some top fighters, as well as, complete beginners. With there being a decent amount of gyms to choose from, you are very likely to find a spot that suits you nicely.

One of the most popular places to train seems to be SuperPro Samui where the likes of Alistar Overeem is known for training at. Other than SuperPro, many fighters speak

highly of Jun Muay Thai, Lamai Muay Thai, and Pinyo Muay Thai. Although Koh Samui is a rather relaxing island, the training at most of these camps is intense and will push you to your limits.

RECOMMENDED GYMS

Jun Muay Thai

It's hard to beat the price for training at 5000 baht per month and accommodations as low as 5500 baht per month, but don't let that fool you! Just because it's cheap doesn't mean it's low quality. The training here is *intense* and the trainers will make sure you aren't slacking off even while you're hitting the heavy bag. Make sure you are ready for a tough work out!

Samui SuperPro

Although classified as a Muay Thai gym, Samui SuperPro is known for hosting a number of K1 fighters looking to improve their kickboxing, as well as, MMA fighters looking to improve their grappling. The gym is consistently being upgraded and is already full of nice training equipment and plenty of training space (they are also continuously expanding their accommodations as well). If you want more variety in your training and to work with all different styles of training partners, this is the place to go.

COST OF LIVING

ACCOMMODATIONS

Compared to most other places in Thailand, Koh Samui is probably on the higher end of the spectrum when it comes to finding a good place to live for cheap. Although there are some backpacker hostels for as little as 400-600 baht a month, if you are looking to have a bit of a more luxurious spot to stay then you should be looking to spend anywhere from 800 - 3000 baht a night. Of course there will be discounts for longer stays, but for the most part, the prices will be similar to Phuket and a bit more expensive than places like Chiang Mai or Koh Phangan.

Most gyms offer some type of accommodation along with their training that might make the most sense in terms of saving money, but just don't expect a 5-star resort unless you are willing to pay for it. Naturally there are deals to be had, but I would not count on it since Koh Samui is getting more and more popular by the day.

FOOD

With Koh Samui being an island, there will naturally be plenty of great seafood spots to check out on the cheap. There are plenty of markets and street vendors that give the best prices when it comes to Thai food, but you will also find your fair share of western

restaurants for when you want to have some comfort foods from back home. Look to spend around 40 - 80 baht for a Thai street side meal and at least 300 baht for a western dinner meal.

And as always, if you want to cook your own food there are plenty of supermarkets like Big C, Tesco Lotus, and Makro Foods to check out.

SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT

You have plenty of shopping options, as well as, more than enough sights to see on the island of Koh Samui. Although some prices may be more expensive than other parts of Thailand, it's somewhat comparable to what you would spend shopping and having a good time in Phuket.

You won't find huge shopping malls like you would in Chaing Mai or Bangkok, but there are shopping centers which have electronic stores, shoe departments, and other shopping options. There are also more than enough boutiques and small markets that offer clothing, jewelry, beach supplies, and souvenirs.

In terms of things to do, you can choose from going on nature walks to beautiful waterfalls or checking out any of the gorgeous beaches around the island. Speaking of beaches, you can relax on the beach while getting a massage or even take up snorkeling, scuba diving, or jet skiing (just watch out for scams). If you somehow get bored of the stunning scenery around the island you can go inside and watch some of the most recent movies at the Tesco Chaweng Cinema.

The list goes on and on with things to do on Koh Samui including the Butterfly Garden, water parks, mini golf, 'real' golf, kayaking, tours, massages, cooking classes and more. On your days off from training you will have more than enough to do!

TRANSPORTATION

Koh Samui is one of the easier places to get around since there is no scarcity of songthaews, motorbike taxis, and meter taxis around the island. These by far are the safest ways of getting around with the songthaews being the cheapest.

You can also rent a motorbike like anywhere else in Thailand, but **beware!** Samui has the highest death toll in Thailand from traffic accidents and you do not want to add to those statistics. If you still feel the need to rent a motorbike to get around, I would advise only to do so if you have some riding experience and preferably a motorcycle license. A motorbike accident can quickly ruin your stay in Thailand.

GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

Being a mixture of Phuket and Koh Phangan, the island of Koh Samui has a relaxing, laid-back atmosphere. But don't let that fool you because it also has a more exciting side with activities for adrenaline junkies and more than enough bars to have some fun nights out.

For the most part, training is serious here with some legitimate fighters coming out of some of the top camps on the island. Training costs are around what you'd expect compared to the rest of Thailand, but there are some gyms that offer cheaper prices.

PROS, CONS, AND OVERVIEW

PROS

Beautiful beaches, waterfalls, and scenery.
Solid Muay Thai gyms.
Great nightlife and plenty of things to do.
Prices are better than Phuket for the most part.

CONS

Crazy drivers and high accident rate.
Prices aren't as good as some other parts of Thailand.

- PATTAYA -

This is known to some as the sex capital of the world, Pattaya is one of those places where you can easily get sucked into a reckless way of life. With sex shows, massage parlors, hookers, ladyboys, and everything you can imagine, it can hard to stay focused and save money with so many temptations and distractions trying to pull you in.

On the other side of the coin, there are a handful of quality Muay Thai gyms you can train at that will definitely help in improving your skills and overall technique... but can you avoid the temptation?

MUAY THAI CAMPS IN PATTAYA

With partying and sex shows being the main attractions in Thailand, it's easy to overlook the fact that there are some great opportunities to train in Pattaya. With training camps like Fairtex, Sityodong, Sor. Klinmee and others, you will be getting the type of quality training you can get anywhere else.

When it comes to training costs, it is pretty affordable compared to most other locations in Thailand. If you choose to train at Fairtex though, the prices are jacked up like you wouldn't believe, but that is partially because the gym is probably the nicest gym in Thailand.

RECOMMENDED GYMS

Fairtex Pattaya

Fairtex is probably the nicest, most pristine gym in Thailand. With state of the art facilities and equipment, you can expect the training to be top notch as well. Although a lot of vacationers come here to try out Thai boxing, it is still a quality place for more seasoned veterans to sharpen their skills as well. If you have some extra money to spend and want to live and train in high quality, clean conditions, then Fairtex Pattaya is one of your best options!

Sityodong

Ever heard of [Samart Payakaroon](#)? Well, if you have, you would know he is arguably the best Muay Thai fighter to ever step into the ring. Can you guess what gym he trained out of? You guessed it, Sityodong.

Although most of the champions who have been produced at the gym have moved on, Sityodong is still one of the most recognizable and respected gyms in Thailand. It is located out of the city center and away from the noise and distractions that could easily make training and afterthought.

COST OF LIVING

ACCOMMODATIONS

Like everywhere else in Thailand, the best deals will be found if you are able to take a Thai friend along for your apartment search. However, not many of us have that luxury when first arriving to Thailand so finding a cheap place can sometimes be difficult. In Pattaya however, it can actually be quite cheap compared to places like Phuket and Bangkok.

If you take your time to look around you can find a great deal on a guesthouse for as little as 500 - 700 baht a day, or 5,000 - 13,000 baht per month. Obviously the cheaper you spend on your accommodations, the less you will get, but if you are on a tight budget, this could be a good place to be (if you can avoid the distractions, that is).

FOOD

Regardless of where you go in Thailand, the food is going to be cheap. Like I mentioned in most of the previous sections, if you are able to eat from the food stalls and find some good local restaurants to eat at, you won't be spending nearly as much as you do back in your home country. There is also your fair share of western restaurants to choose from if you don't mind spending a little bit more money on the comforts of home.

SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT

This is where it can get very, very interesting. Shopping and entertainment in a sex tourist city like Pattaya is a lot different than shopping and entertainment in a city like Chiang Mai. If you are someone who loves the nightlife of Las Vegas or other crazy party cities, then the atmosphere of Pattaya will mix with you perfectly.

With a hundred go-go bars and a hundred more regular bars, there will be plenty of choices when it comes to having a crazy night out. Regardless of what bar you end up going to, there will be girls hounding you all night long trying to win you over with some sexual touching and sweet talk.

Need a "massage"? The massage parlors in Pattaya (and basically anywhere in Thailand) will provide you with services you won't get back at home.

Besides the craziness that Pattaya is known for, there is also a huge shopping mall with a massive movie theatre, rooftop pool, shooting ranges, go-karts and more. There are also zoo's, markets, and temples around Pattaya to check out if you want to find entertainment besides booze and girls.

I should not even have to say this but, if you are on a strict budget and have a problem controlling yourself when it comes to spending money on women and alcohol, then you should avoid Pattaya at all costs. If you want to train your ass off and improve, but feel like you could get tempted by the sin city that is Pattaya, then you will be much better off training at a different part of Thailand.

TRANSPORTATION

Just like most places in Thailand, it can be a bit overwhelming trying to figure out the transportation system. Once you figure it out in Pattaya, it can be relatively cheap and affordable.

"Baht buses" or songthaews run all across the city with a predetermined route that can be hard to figure out. Since it's so cheap (only around 10 baht per ride) it might be worth figuring out if you are on a tight budget and trying to save some cash. Make sure to

carry exact change if possible, otherwise the driver could very easily try to rip you off and drive away without giving you change.

Other than the baht buses, you can take motorbike taxis around the city for cheap as well. It will take some bargaining and experience to figure out what the best price actually is, but it will be worth it in the long run if you want a convenient, cheap ride around town.

Don't want to deal with public transportation? Then, you can rent a motorbike for around 3,000 baht per month and ride around with little restrictions to where you want to go. Just keep in mind to always wear a helmet, carry your license, and follow the rules of the road, otherwise expect to be pulled over (actually you should expect to get pulled over anyway). Make sure to be polite and respectful to the Thailand police!

GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

Pattaya is like Las Vegas on steroids. With a plethora of sinful temptations, distractions, scam artists, and unethical practices in Pattaya, you can very easily get sucked into to a trip of pleasure and fun rather than a trip that was initially focused on self improvement and training.

Besides the Las Vegas type of atmosphere, Pattaya doesn't have too much else to brag about. The place in general is rather dirty and polluted. Not to mention the beaches aren't Thailand's best. Yes the training can be good, but it can be tough to stick to training if you lack self control.

PROS, CONS AND OVERVIEW

PROS

Great party scene and crazy nightlife.
A handful quality training camps.
Cheap living expenses.

CONS

Major temptation and distractions.
Rather unclean place to live.
Not the best scenery.

QUICK OVERVIEW

Pattaya is a great place if you want to party in supplement to your Muay Thai training. Sure, some people can train full-time in Pattaya and avoid all the temptations of the nightlife, but do you want constantly be testing your willpower on a day-to-day basis?

Yes, the training can be good, and the living expenses are rather cheap, but if you are looking to really focus on your training and experience a more traditional way of Thai living, than Pattaya isn't the smartest choice.

- PHUKET -

Phuket (pronounced poo-ket, not fu-cket) is the most popular place in Thailand for Nak Muays who don't want to stray too far off the beaten path. The air is clean (in most places), the scenery is gorgeous, and it is catered to tourists which will help limit the culture shock you are sure to encounter, especially if it's your first trip abroad.

Since it is marketed to tourists, you can expect a lot of the Thais there will speak decent English so you should be able to have some basic conversations with them. That being said, it would be a smart idea to learn some Thai to really dive into the culture and truly experience of living in a foreign country. Plus, you will most likely be able to haggle some great deals if you speak in Thai!

When it comes to the training camps, the majority of them are solid and will have everything you need from quality trainers to new equipment. Since Phuket is a high-traffic spot for tourists, most of the gyms are relatively expensive and can be a bit of a rip off if you are not careful.

Regardless of what training camp in Phuket you choose, chances are you will run into tons of other foreign nak muay since this is essentially the hub where farang (foreigners in Thai) come to train, so you are bound to make some friends along the way.

MUAY THAI CAMPS IN PHUKET

Chances are you have stumbled across a handful of the Muay Thai camps in Phuket by doing some research on the internet. The most well known camp is probably Tiger Muay Thai due to their huge internet presence, but other camps such as Sinbi, Rawai, and Lion are slowly building their reputation as the go-to gyms in Phuket. However, underneath the heavily marketed gyms there are some diamonds in the rough that you should consider as well, so make sure to keep your eyes and ears open!

Generally speaking, the cost for training in Phuket is going to be more expensive than anywhere else in Thailand. Since it is focused on tourists (who are used to relatively high qualities of life) they know that most farang will shell out the extra money to accommodate their needs. You can expect to pay anywhere from 8000 to 12000 baht a month for training as well as a good chunk for the accommodations onsite at the gym as well.

Nearly all the gyms in Phuket cover the entire spectrum of nak muay from complete beginner to experienced professional, so you should not have an issue finding a gym that caters to your skill level.

You probably won't see too many Thai fighters in Phuket either. The majority of Thai fighters consist of the trainers who routinely fight on local shows and usually have over 100 fights. So even if you are a more experienced fighter looking to train alongside some top tier fighters, you will be able to get some good sparring in with the trainers if there aren't many skilled farang fighters around.

RECOMMENDED GYMS

Lion Muay Thai

In recent years (since undergoing new management), Lion has really been stepping up its game and is constantly building some of the best foreign fighters in Thailand. Being able to train alongside top foreigners who have similar goals is a great way to stay motivated and work hard during your time in Thailand.

Nitah Muay Thai

My time at Nitah Muay Thai was great! It is a small gym with a very welcoming atmosphere, which is definitely my style. The trainers there are all good guys who will push you hard and still manage to make it fun even when you are gasping for air. The owner, Anita, is a sweetheart and will help you get situated in every way possible. If you stay at Cafe Siam (which is a quick walk to the gym) Cheryle and Donna will make you feel like family during your stay. Not to mention the food they serve there is bangin'! If you're staying in Patong, then definitely give Nitah Muay Thai a look!

Sinbi Muay Thai

One of the most popular places to train in Phuket has got to be Sinbi. I've spoken to people who absolutely love the training there, but they seem to really enjoy the family like atmosphere even more! This is partially due to the fact that the training is done primarily in a group setting and the trainers are there to guide you through your sessions.

With plenty of quality trainers and training partners to work with, you are bound to improve your technique in more ways than one. Although the costs for training and accommodations are a bit pricey, it might be well worth it since it provides a great atmosphere and focused training.

Singpatong Sitnumnoi

With Phuket being known as one of the more touristy areas for people to train, it can be difficult to find gyms that give a raw, authentic training camp experience. Fortunately, if you are looking for hardcore training with quality training partners, then Singpatong Sitnumnoi might be a perfect fit for you.

Although they lack some of the nicer facilities and accommodations, you should have no issue finding a nice place to stay close by in Patong. Speaking of Patong, if you are a partier it could be a good and/or bad thing depending on your discipline and self control!

Sitsongpeenong

Another gym that is helping bring more competition and authentic training to Phuket is Sitsongpeenong. With top fighters like Kem and Tongchai coming out of Sitsongpeenong, you can expect the training to be high quality. Their owner, Tim from Australia, is constantly looking for top trainers to instruct his fighters and it pays dividends on fight night.

Located near Kamala Beach, it's a great place to train your ass off and then enjoy some relaxation near a beautiful beach!

COST OF LIVING

ACCOMMODATIONS

Like I mentioned earlier, the costs in Phuket are going to be more expensive than anywhere else in Thailand because it is a hot spot for tourists and vacationers looking to spend money. Even though it can be expensive, you can still get by on a relatively tight budget if you are smart and willing to live within your means.

If you choose to live onsite near most gyms, you can normally get a deal by purchasing the training and accommodations together. However, you might be able to find a better deal on a better apartment if you hop on a motorbike and do some searching. Generally speaking most Phuket Muay Thai gyms will charge anywhere from 10,000 baht to 20,000+ baht for a decent room, but like I said, if you are willing to do some searching you can find much cheaper.

Even though finding your own apartment is the best way to save money, it is difficult as a foreigner to get a good deal because the Thai people love to overcharge foreigners. For example, going to Muay Thai fights normally cost farang anywhere from \$20 - \$40 in Phuket, where the Thai people will generally get in for free! Same goes with food, clothing and services... to be honest, the double pricing is a bit ridiculous, but it is what it is and you have to learn how to work around it when you can.

One of the best ways to find a cheap place to stay and avoid the double pricing is to have a local Thai friend help you out. I know what you're thinking, how am I supposed to make friends with a Thai and get them to help me out when I've only been in Thailand for a couple days? Step out of your comfort zone!

The amazing thing about Thailand is that the majority of people are super friendly and super helpful. If you are outgoing, friendly and willing to step out of your comfort zone to

do some apartment searching, who knows, maybe you'll be lucky enough to land a nice pad for as little as 5,000 baht a month!

On the other side of things, if you are looking for a more upscale place to stay and not worried about doing extensive apartment searching, you will be able to find a luxurious bungalow or villa in no time. But, if you have a limited amount of money and are trying to stay in Thailand for an extended period of time, your best bet would be to save that money by finding a cheaper place to live!

FOOD

When it comes to finding food, you will no problems finding delicious and cheap food. Eating Thai food from local food stalls and Thai restaurants is going to be your best bet when it comes to eating on the cheap. And just because it's cheap doesn't mean it's bad either! Some of the best food I have had was for around 40 baht (a little over \$1) and I would eat it almost every day.

If you are in the mood for some western food and need to do some food shopping on your own, most of the prices will be comparable to the prices back home (with a few exceptions of course). My advice would be to eat as much local Thai food as you can handle and occasionally pig out on western food. Immersing yourself in the culture by eating Thai food will save you money and make your experience that much more unique and memorable.

SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT

Phuket is loaded with plenty of places to fill your need for new clothes, sunglasses, or beach toys. Almost everywhere you go you will find small markets or vendors that are selling the most random things (and for relatively cheap too!).

One thing to keep in mind about shopping in Phuket is that there are a TON of vendors looking to sell identical things. You do not have to settle for a price you think is unfair because you can walk right down the street and find the same thing. For example, my girlfriend Liz wanted a pair of headphones that one vendor was trying to sell for 500 baht. We declined and decided to try another vendor that was selling the same exact pair of headphone for 250 baht!

Basically, what I am trying to say is that you should not be afraid to try hard to get a bargain and don't be afraid to walk away and try your luck somewhere else. Usually a good way to get a cheap price is to act semi-interested and be okay with walking away. Once you get the vendor thinking you are semi-interested in buying, they will be quick to give you deals just to make a sale.

If you are not a big fan of haggling because it makes you feel awkward, there are some stores that have set prices, but they tend to be more on the expensive side of things.

When it comes to entertainment, I don't even know where to start! From venturing out on your own to explore hidden beaches or Buddhist temples to spending some quality time at Bangla Road experiencing your first ping pong show, there is more than enough to do in Phuket. You can also find plenty of awesome tours to take as well as golf courses, shooting ranges, cabaret shows, and more!

TRANSPORTATION

Renting a motorbike is definitely going to be one of, if not *the* cheapest way to get around Phuket. Depending where you go, normal daily costs for renting a motorbike is about 150 - 300 baht, while normal monthly costs can range from 3000 - 5000 baht which comes out to around 125 baht a day.

However, if you are looking to stay in Phuket long term (or anywhere in Thailand for that matter) your best option might be to buy a motorbike. This will help you save money in the long run while also avoiding any scams that could easily happen if you were to rent.

Think about it this way, if you were to buy (and can afford) a 20,000 - 30,000 baht motorbike, you will pay the same amount in renting it for a little over a year. There is also a good chance that you could sell it for the same price you bought it if you make good connections and know the right people. If you are planning on staying in Thailand for awhile, I would suggest going the route of buying a motorbike as opposed to renting.

If you are sketched out about buying or renting a motorbike, there are plenty of motorbike taxi's that can escort you to wherever you need to go. It can be a bit stressful riding on the back of a motorbike that is weaving in and out of traffic, but they do have experience with driving in Thailand so they are pretty competent drivers for the most part.

If motorbikes are out of the question, then the main way to get around is tuk-tuks, which are more or less of a ripoff. Yes, compared to other parts of the world, they are still relatively cheap, but in Thailand they are rather expensive. Compared to taxi's anywhere else in Thailand, the price of hiring a tuk-tuk to take your places around Phuket is ridiculously expensive. The reason tuk-tuks are able to charge so much is because the Thai mafia owns them and they need to keep their revenues up. With that in mind, do not pick a fight with a tuk-tuk driver!

Whether you decide to hire a motorbike taxi or tuk-tuk, do yourself a favor and do not ask "how much." That question is sure to be answered with a overpriced estimate for the cost to ride to your destination, so your best bet is to haggle with them and give them a low price to start. Once you spend some time in Phuket, you will get a general

idea for how much it costs to get from A to B, but do not be afraid to try to get a deal whenever you can!

GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

I know you must be tired of me saying this but, Phuket is touristy! There is going to be a solid amount of things to do and distractions that could very easily put your Muay Thai training on the back burner.

When you first arrive in Phuket, you might have goal to train and fight as often as possible, but places like Bangla Road can easily help you forget why you came to Thailand in the first place. You can compare Bangla Road to the likes of Bourbon Street during Mardi Gras; a long strip of bars, dance clubs, loud music and half-naked women everywhere you turn. I have seen a number of nak muay fall into the trap that is Bangla Road and never get back into a good flow of training... don't let that be you!

Don't worry, Phuket isn't just a party city. There are plenty of gorgeous locations in Phuket that are away from the noisy crowd and away from any distractions. With beautiful beaches almost anywhere you go, it can be a great place to recharge after a long week of grueling training sessions. You can also find plenty of massage parlors to loosen up any knots or tight spots you have from the grind of daily training, and it's only around 300 baht!

The good thing about Phuket being a top tourist destination is that there are tons of awesome tours of breathtaking islands, traditional Thai temples (wats), and local scenery that you won't want to miss. If you do not feel like spending money on the tours, there are infinite places to explore around the island on your own. With numerous lookout points to watch a beautiful sunset and several pristine, quiet beaches to get away from the noise, you are sure to find your paradise somewhere in Phuket.

Even though your chances are high that you will run into the pushy salesman, prostitute, or vendors, the people are generally very nice and friendly. You are sure to make a couple Thai friends during your stay who will show you around the area and give you a better idea for what Phuket is all about. I don't know about you, but talking about Phuket is making me want to be there right now!

PROS, CONS, AND OVERVIEW

PROS

Beautiful beaches and scenery to explore during your down time.
A number of quality training camps to choose from.
Plenty of things to do outside of training.

CONS

Expensive - accommodations, transportation etc.

Touristy atmosphere with a lot of distractions and pushy vendors.

Almost too many camps to pick from with some being overpriced and overbooked.

QUICK OVERVIEW

If this is your first time heading to Thailand then, training in Phuket is a good option for you since you won't have to worry about changing your lifestyle or learning a completely different language. However, it will cost more than almost everywhere else in Thailand and if you pick the wrong gym that focuses more on profit than the actual quality of training, then you might not have as good a time as you initially hoped for.

The transportation isn't as easy compared to other parts of Thailand and is more expensive too. Just try to be smart when it comes to renting/buying a motorbike or haggling for a good price with a tuk-tuk driver.

The shopping and tourist attractions are great things to do during your down time, but there are plenty of tempting distractions in Phuket which can deter you from your Muay Thai goals.

My first trip to Thailand was in Phuket and I had a great experience that changed the direction of my life. If you choose Phuket just make sure to follow your gut, do detailed research, and save up enough money to enjoy yourself!

- TYING UP LOOSE ENDS -

In a perfect world, you could drop everything you are doing, pack your bags, and fly to Thailand to start a new life and train Muay Thai full-time. Unfortunately, this world is far from perfect and chances are you will have to take care of a few things before you are able to travel to Thailand. Your individual situation will play a major role in figuring out what you have to get done before heading abroad, but here are some common things to consider.

TAKING TIME OFF FROM WORK

This could mean using your vacation days to spend a few weeks in Thailand or it could mean quitting your job all together and chasing your dreams of becoming a professional fighter. Either way, you are going to have to tell your boss about your plans to travel to Thailand eventually, so you might as well consider your options now.

What are your options anyway? The way I see it, there are two main ones:

Take A Vacation

If you are looking to have a short vacation for a few weeks in Thailand, hopefully your job is flexible enough to allow you to do so and you won't have any issues asking for the time off. If not, then you might want to consider getting a job that allows you to live life a little more. This is an ideal option for people who want to experience training in Thailand, but who want to continue living and working in their home country.

Change Your Life

If you are considering pursuing your passion for Muay Thai and trying a different way of life in Thailand, then quitting your job is probably the most logical option. However, you are going to have to ask yourself some tough questions and make some difficult decisions.

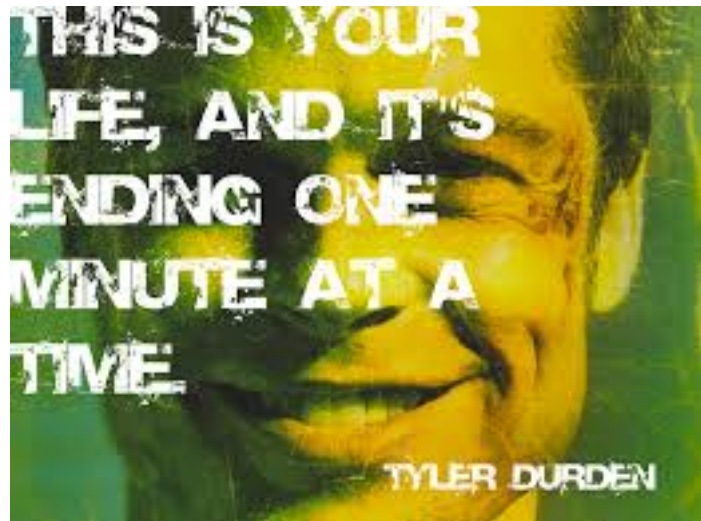
If you hate your job, make shitty money, and could easily replace it, then (in my opinion) it's a no-brainer to quit it and pursue your dreams. On the other hand, if you love your job, the people you work with, and have some doubt about getting your job back if you were to try to come back, then you will have to do some soul searching to figure out the right decision.

My Thoughts

Not that my opinion matters, but I figured sharing my thoughts might give you some direction or insight for what you should do.

One of my favorite movies of all time is *Fight Club* and it's not just because I have a small man crush on Brad Pitt either. The movie makes you think about your life and the direction you are going in. It makes you take a step back and reassess what you're doing and why you're doing what you're doing... What are you doing anyway?

"I see all this potential, and I see it squandered. God damn it, an entire generation pumping gas, waiting tables - slaves with white collars. Advertising has us chasing cars and clothes, working jobs we hate so we can buy shit we don't need." - Tyler Durden



Are you living the life that society expects of you, or are you living the life that you truly want to live?

In my eyes, life is too short *not* to pursue your dreams. I would much rather try to achieve my goals and fail, than not try at all and live in fear and regret for the rest of my life. I also believe that people make way too many excuses to why they can't do something, like move to Thailand. Once you take responsibilities for your decisions, actions, and life in general, that is when you will start living a life with purpose.

Now, I am not saying you should quit your awesome job and pursue a career as a fighter in Thailand (but I'm not saying you shouldn't either), I am just saying that *you* are in control of *your* life, not anyone else. Once you realize that the only limitations and restrictions are the ones you put on yourself, you will be freer to do what you want to do.

If that makes sense and resonates with you, great! If it sounds like a bunch of mumbo-jumbo that has no relevance to your life, at least try to take a step back and reassess your life and what you truly want out of it.

SELLING ALL YOUR STUFF

This is one of the best ways to create a larger savings account that will allow you to stay in Thailand for an even longer period of time. It is also great in the sense that you can do a purge of all the things that you don't use or need anymore. Essentially, it is a hardcore spring cleaning session (whether it's spring or not is beside the point).

When you get a chance, do a quick assessment of the things you can get rid of. I know it can be difficult to part ways with some of your things, but keep in mind, they are just *things*. However I understand that there might be some old souvenirs or childhood toys that hold sentimental value, and in that case you might want to hold on to them. But even then, they are still just *things* and will not compare to the memories and experiences you make in Thailand.

To sell your things, you can do it the old school way and hold a yard sale of some sort in your local neighborhood. If that isn't your cup of tea, using internet sites like ebay or craigslist might be your best option. There are some great posts done by a few expats on the website **Tieland To Thailand** that will give you more details about the best time, and how to go about selling your stuff. [Click here to check it out!](#)

PUTTING YOUR STUFF IN STORAGE

If you find it difficult to part ways with your things, or have furniture from your apartment or house that you want to keep for when you decide to come back from Thailand, you might want to consider renting out a storage unit. Obviously the cost will depend on how large of a storage unit you need and what the rates are like in your city, so make sure to do your research. Do not forget to add this to your budget!

PAYING OFF AND CANCELING BILLS

Having a clean slate before you travel abroad will make your trip that much better and stress free. You won't have to worry about late payments or stress about coming back home to even more bills. Do your best to paying off your debts all at once if possible. If it is not possible, then consider adding small monthly payments to your budget until they are all paid off.

Also, be sure to cancel all your bills and excess monthly subscriptions. This usually means canceling the basics like electric, cable, and phone (land-line), but could also mean canceling additional subscriptions like your Netflix account, porn membership, xbox live and others. I know it's really sad to think about, but you will get over it once you are on the beach in Thailand.

SUBLETTING YOUR APARTMENT OR HOUSE

If you are in a lease or own a house, you might want to consider subletting it to help pay off the rent/mortgage and possibly even make some extra money in the process. Of course this will depend on your situation and if your landlord allows you to sublet it, but it is worth looking into! Just make sure to put your stuff in storage like I mentioned earlier so you don't have a stranger rummaging through your Pokemon cards and Playboy magazines.

LEAVE ON GOOD TERMS

I highly recommend avoiding burning bridges before you leave. Of course, there are some exceptions to the rule, but for the most part, try to leave without any arguments or pissing anyone off. I am a firm believer in karma. If you quit your job on bad terms or leave your friends hanging by making them pay off your part of the rent, then karma is going to eventually come around and kick your ass. Plus, being a *good* person and leaving on *good* terms feels *good*! Imagine that!

- CHAPTER 2: SAVING -

- HOW TO ESTIMATE COSTS FOR LIVING IN THAILAND -

Let's get straight to the point. Spending money sucks, especially if you don't have much. If you are lucky enough to be rolling in the dough and have no qualms about dropping thousands of dollars on a moment's notice, then this portion of the guide is most likely not going to help you. But I'm guessing you are not filthy rich, right?

You are probably in a similar financial situation as me - relatively poor, living with minimal spending, and constantly looking for ways to earn and save more money. If this sounds like you, then taking the time to estimate the potential costs of living in Thailand is going to be a vital step to making your dream a reality.

Along with estimating the costs of living, it is equally important to prepare a realistic budget because it will make your trip much less stressful and much more enjoyable. One of the most important pieces of advice I can give you when it comes to estimating costs is this:

Plan for the worst, hope for the best.

What that means is that you should always be rounding-up when you are estimating your potential living costs in Thailand. If you try to cut corners and shave off some of the estimated prices, you will most likely run into financial trouble when you realize it actually cost more than you first thought! Over-estimate all your costs and be prepared for unexpected expenses to pop up.

Let's get started!

STEP #1: ESTIMATE ONE-TIME TRAVEL COSTS

One-time costs include your plane ticket, visa, passport, travel insurance, luggage, and other miscellaneous expenditures that you will only have to worry about once. Obviously these costs will depend on where you live and other variables, so doing your own research and estimation is important. However, I figure using my spending as an example for you to follow might be helpful:

Plane Ticket (US to Thailand) = \$1300 (roundtrip), \$570 (one-way)

Passport = \$165

Visa (double entry tourist) = \$40

Travel Insurance (1 year) = \$913

Luggage (2 duffel bags and 1 backpack) = \$100 - \$150

Doctor Check-up = \$50

Those are the most common one-time travel costs that you have to worry about, but there could be others that I neglected to take into consideration such as electronics, Muay Thai gear, or extra clothing.

Although Thailand's healthcare system is relatively high quality, it's still smart to have some type of insurance before heading over. Make sure you don't skim past the [travel insurance section](#) of this guide!

STEP #2: ESTIMATE MONTHLY LIVING EXPENSES

Living in Thailand is cheaper than living in most countries around the world, but your spending can add up quickly if you are unaware of where your money is going. All of the costs below depend on hundreds of different factors and how good you are with money. Although you could possibly get by with spending minimally, make sure that you over-estimate your costs just in case.

These are the expenses you will most likely have to take into consideration when you make your trip to Thailand:

TRAINING COSTS

Your costs for training will depend primarily on the location you choose to train (obviously). For instance, training in Chiang Mai is usually cheaper than training at most gyms in Phuket which tend to be at the higher end of the cost spectrum. There is also a possibility that you could [get your training sponsored](#) by the gym and not have to worry about paying a dime.

Generally speaking, training will cost anywhere from 8,000 baht to 15,000 baht a month, depending on the gym and location of your choice. Some gyms will offer personal training for additional costs while others have it including with the pricing. I know I've said it plenty of times already but, *do your research!*

ACCOMMODATIONS/RENT

Just like your training costs are dependent on the location you choose, so is the cost for accommodations. Most gyms have deals and promotional packages where you can pay for training and accommodations together which can be more convenient and save you a few bucks.

If you want to take a shot at finding your own place to stay, there is a chance that you can find a great deal for cheap in surrounding areas, but do not put all your eggs in one basket by just assuming you will find an amazing deal.

The cost of living in a place that is off the gym grounds will depend on what type of living space you are looking for and what type of amenities you need. If you are on a tight budget, then a studio or one bedroom apartment with a fan or AC seems like a reasonable option. If you are going with friends and want to split a 2-3 bedroom apartment that has a pool, you can probably find a good deal for that, as well.

Don't get your hopes up though! Good deals are there to be found, but it takes some work to find them. If you don't pay for a place upfront before you head to Thailand, you should not have much of a problem finding a place within a few days of being there as long as you do some searching.

Depending on the lifestyle you can afford, you can expect to pay anywhere between 4,000 baht - 20,000 baht.

FOOD

Thai food is awesome. Not only does it taste great, but it's also the cheapest way to eat in Thailand. If you find local spots you will be able to eat some of the most delicious meals you have ever had while spending next to nothing. You can also find some quality meat, fruits, and other foods for around 30 baht (\$1) from street vendors who are all over Thailand.



Personally, I love me some Thai food, but it can get old pretty quickly when you eat it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner every single day. Fortunately, in most places there will be western restaurants and grocery stores where you can pick up some of your favorite meals and treats from back home, but chances are you will end up paying around the same price as you would back home.

All this being said, you really don't have to worry about cooking because most food is relatively cheap (although cooking your own meals could save some money in the long run). If you explore your surroundings and become aware of where the locals eat, you will find some amazing restaurants where you will eat some of the best food of your life for dirt cheap.

For me, monthly food costs ranged depending on how frugal I felt like being. There have been months where I spend 7,000 baht (\$233) and other months I have spent almost double. Since I can spend upward to 14,000 baht for food, I made sure to use the higher end of the spectrum when I created my budget.

ENTERTAINMENT

To avoid burn out and dreading your stay in Thailand, it is super important to enjoy your time there by checking out your surroundings and exploring the beautiful countryside. Take tours, get massages, get tattoos, and go to Muay Thai fights.

Either way, make sure you set aside a budget for entertainment expenses so you are able to blow off some steam when you get fatigued from training. I personally spent around \$150 a month on various sources of entertainment which included tours to Koh Phi Phi, bungee jumping, and massages. All of it was worth every penny!

VISA RUNS/EXTENSIONS

If you are not able to obtain an education or work visa and if you plan on staying in Thailand for more than 60 days, you will have to take into consideration how much it costs to extend and renew your visa.

A visa extension runs at 1900 baht, but that does not include the transportation to immigration, photocopies, and passport photos you will need to apply for a extension.

The cost of a visa run varies greatly depending on where you are, where you want to do your visa run, if you want to do it quickly, or if you'd like to spend a couple days in a different country like Malaysia, Cambodia, or Laos.

TOILETRIES

Toiletry costs are not significant by any means, but it is still an added expenditure that you need to consider when estimating the costs of living in Thailand. Toilet paper, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, and other bathroom supplies are cheap and easily found since 7-Eleven's are almost on every corner.

SHOPPING

Whether you are a shopping addict or not, make sure that you have a small budget for souvenirs, clothing, and training gear.

I hate spending my money, especially when it comes to shopping, but I still make sure to set some money aside in case I need some new shin guards, electronics, or articles of clothing. Another reason to have a shopping budget is so that you can bring home a grab bag of gifts to hand out to your family and friends, which I'm sure they would appreciate.



Your shopping budget depends all on your spending habits, but you should look to have *at least* a budget of 1500 baht (\$50) a month. I spent around double that and I seriously can't stand spending my money shopping.

LAUNDRY

Getting your laundry done in Thailand is cheap and convenient in most areas. With the general cost of a load of laundry costing around 30-40 baht per kilo, you don't have to worry about breaking the bank when you use the laundry service. Some laundry services can be a bit over zealous with fabric conditioner and ironing your clothing on the hottest setting, but generally speaking, these small laundry shops offer a solid service.

Another option is doing laundry yourself, which I'm not a big fan of because I *hate* doing laundry. But you do save a little money since buying a small detergent at a local 7-Eleven costs a mere 10 baht. You can either buy a bucket to dip your clothing in or use a washing machine in your local neighborhood. To dry your clothes, you can either hang them outside your room or invest in a 70 baht clothing line, it's up to you!

I found that I spent around 600 - 900 baht (\$20-\$30) a month on laundry.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is another one of those costs that has a lot of variables to take into consideration, such as location, how long you are staying, your comfort on a motorbike, and your ability to haggle. If you are staying for three or more months and have experience riding a motorbike and feel comfortable driving on a road with crazy Thai

drivers, then your best bet is to buy a motorbike. This will cost around 20,000 baht, but chances are you will be able to sell it for around the same amount if you hustle and make it happen. Make sure to read up in the ThaiVisa.com forums for additional tips on buying a bike.

Renting a motorbike is a little more risky because you'll have to worry about motorbike rental scams and damaging the bike. A day rental is usually around 150 - 300 baht, where a monthly rental can cost anywhere from 3000 - 5000 baht. Hopping on a motorbike not something that you want to do? Then make sure to consider what the costs are for using public transportation, taxis, tuk-tuks and songtaews.

- SAMPLE BUDGET FOR 1 MONTH -

If you haven't gotten the point that creating a budget is an important step to having a good time in Thailand, I don't know what else to say. You can wing it and try to be as smart with your money as possible, but it will never be as good as if you had some type of guidelines to abide by.

Since your budget will depend on you as an individual and your financial situation, there are a number of different types of budgets to create. For the sake of saving money, I'm going to cover the "*Cheap Skate*" budget which I'm assuming will apply to most people. If you have a little more money to spend just know that your money will go far and you will basically live like a king (or queen). You can base your budget off of the "*Cheap Skate*" budget and add on to it accordingly.

But before we go into the sample budgets, make sure to keep in consideration miscellaneous costs that are sure to pop-up when you are in Thailand. These costs are not in the sample budget but can add to your expenses quickly!

Massages - They are so cheap in Thailand, it's hard to not get at least a couple during your off days from training. You can get a Thai massage for as little as 200 baht, or an oil massage for 300 baht in most places.

Pharmacy - Getting Namman liniment, ibuprofen, aspirin, Neosporin, electrolytes and other things you need for training can add a small amount to your budget.

Motorbike Rental - If you live far from the gym, or the gym is far away from town, you might want more freedom for where you go and what you do. Renting a motorbike has its ups and downs, but you can rent one monthly for as little as 3,500 baht, or just choose to get one daily when you need it for around 200 baht. If you stay for longer than 3 months, you might be better off buying one for around 10,000 baht and then selling it when you leave.

Entertainment - Whether your forte is movies, drinking with your friends, or going on a tour of the islands, chances are you are going to want to get out every now and then to take your mind off of training.

Ladies - Getting caught up with a lady can very easily wipe out your bank account. If you have some self control and game, you might be able to pick up a Thai girlfriend for free, but I know of plenty of guys who get caught in a trap of paying on a day-to-day basis for a lady to keep them company.

Emergencies - It sucks to think about, but things could very easily take a turn for the worst. There is a possibility that you could get in a motorbike accident, injured from training, sick from foreign bacteria, or a number of other things. Having some money saved up in case of an emergency is a smart thing to do. Also, it is in your best interest to have some type of travel insurance incase something bad were to happen.

- CHEAP SKATE BUDGET -

When it comes to living as frugal as possible the best tip I can give you is to live and think like a local. Obviously, you will have to make some sacrifices when it comes to modern day luxuries, but if you want to stretch out your money as much as possible, you're going to have to rough it a little.

If you plan on staying longer term (longer than a month) then you should also pay an upfront monthly fee as opposed to paying day-to-day. For instance, instead of paying 400 baht a night for a room, which comes out to about 12,000 baht a month, you could probably get a deal for 10,000 baht by committing to the month. Same goes with motorbikes and training.

In terms of food, try to eat primarily Thai food at local Thai restaurants because those will be your cheapest options. You might also want to consider investing in a hot plate or tea kettle and buying some simple foods like oatmeal, fruits, and eggs to cook. It might be a cost upfront, but it will save you money in the long run.

You will also want to consider buying your water in bulk or using refill stations (which typically cost 1 baht) if they are around your area.

And lastly, the budget below is based on living in Phuket. Obviously the costs will be slightly different if you were to live in other areas like Chaing Mai, Koh Phangan, etc. so I also give you a basic idea for what to expect to pay in those areas as well.

CHEAP SKATE BUDGET FOR 1 MONTH IN PHUKET

POPULAR DESTINATION = EXPENSIVE LIVING COSTS

Phuket is the #1 destination for tourists in Thailand, so, naturally, the prices are going to be jacked up compared to other parts of the country. However, it is a beautiful part of the country (hence the tourism) and catches the eyes of a lot of first timers who are looking to train in Thailand.

In terms of getting there, the cost of flying over to Thailand will obviously depend on the season you decide to go and what country you are flying out from. Usually the cheapest way to fly is straight into Bangkok and then, take a connection from there to Phuket. If you want to save even more money, you can take an overnight bus which takes a lot longer but is about \$100 cheaper.

Here is a general idea for what a Cheap Skate budget looks like in Phuket. Keep in mind that the costs are *overestimated* to make sure you have enough money incase things happen to be more expensive than you initially thought or an emergency arises.

ONE TIME COSTS

Visa (single entry tourist) = \$30

Health/Travel insurance = \$75

Round trip airfare from NY to Bangkok = \$1500 US

Bus from Bangkok to Phuket = 1300 baht (\$43.33 US)

Transportation to gym - Shuttle = \$5-\$10, or Taxi = \$30+

1 month training costs = \$333 US

1 month accommodation = \$200 - \$300 US

DAILY COSTS

Breakfast - Eggs, omelet, muesli, fruit shake, or oatmeal = Around 50 baht per day (\$50 per month)

Lunch - cheap Thai meal = 60 - 150 baht per day (\$60-150 per month)

Dinner - cheap Thai meal = 60 - 150 baht per day (\$60-150 per month)

Drinks - only water = around 50 baht per week (\$6.66 per month)

Transportation - bumming rides from training partners and the occasional taxi or tuk-tuk = \$50 per month

Laundry (doing your own) = \$10

Shopping/Toiletries = \$50

Entertainment - mainly free stuff like sightseeing, relaxing on the beach, hiking, TV, internet etc. = Free

One Month Total = \$2777.99

Monthly Spending w/out airfare and transportation = \$1100

Three Month Total = Around \$5000 or \$1666.66 a month

If this seems like a lot, keep in mind that there are plenty of ways to save money while you are in Thailand that are mentioned throughout the guide. Here are some of the biggest ways to shave off some spending:

- Living off the camp in a less-than-luxurious room with only a fan can be as little as 4000 baht per month (\$133).
- Bumming rides on your training partners motorbikes or splitting tuk-tuk costs when heading to the market can save you a decent chunk of change.
- Paying for a package of 20 sessions of training (costs around \$133 dollars) rather than the unlimited monthly cost. This means you will have 1 class a day, 5 times a week but will have to train solo in your off time.
- Find a cheap, local Thai restaurant and eat primarily Thai food for breakfast, lunch and dinner. You can find meals for as little as 50 baht and eat that every day if you had to.

Also, if you are able to stay for longer than a month, you can also save money on food by investing in a hot plate and/or tea kettle to make some of your own food for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Not to mention you'll get a good feel for the area and most likely find places with the best deals of food, shopping, and accommodations.

CHEAP SKATE BUDGET FOR 1 MONTH IN KOH PHANGAN SAME SAME, BUT DIFFERENT (AND CHEAPER) THAN PHUKET

I love Koh Phangan. It's like Phuket but not as overpopulated, touristy or expensive. The beaches are beautiful, the people are friendly, and the general atmosphere is laid back. You can find your own separate house near the beach for as little as 5,000 baht, or spend even less on a smaller bungalow situated away from the beach which can cost as little as 3,000 baht (\$100 US).

Koh Phangan might not be for everyone, but I would recommend it to anyone who wants to be in a beautiful, relaxing area with gorgeous beaches where you could very well be the only person laying out in the sand. Oh yea, the training is great and the general quality of life here is high, especially if you can afford a little bit more.

There are a number of ways to get to Koh Phangan, but the cheapest way (and longest) is to fly into Bangkok and then take a connecting bus/ferry combination to the island for around 1,300 baht. You can also fly down south and then take a connecting bus/ferry combo to the island, but it will obviously cost a little bit more.

There really isn't a need to fill space and write basically the same budget as the one I outlined above. Basically what you need to know is this; the same budget outlined for Phuket will go a lot further in Koh Phangan. Living on Koh Phangan also gives you the option to save even more money if you were to be okay with the same *Cheap Skate* living standards in Phuket!

The main thing to take from this section is that if you use the same *Cheap Skate* budget in Koh Phangan that is outlined for Phuket, your money will go a lot further and your quality of life will most likely be much better. On the other hand, you could save even more money on Koh Phangan by sacrificing some common luxuries and living minimally.

CHEAP SKATE BUDGET FOR 1 MONTH IN CHIANG MAI CHEAP LIVING, MINIMAL DISTRACTIONS, AND A TRADITIONAL FEEL

The monthly cost of living in Chiang Mai is probably one of the lowest you will find anywhere in Thailand, especially if you are good at being frugal.

The cost for accommodation, training, transportation, and food is similar to the costs on Koh Phangan and probably, even cheaper. The simple fact is that you get a lot more bang for your buck compared to other areas of Thailand (mainly Phuket). For example it is possible to find a quality, relatively large air conditioned room for around 5,000 baht a month in Chiang Mai, where in Phuket that would *maybe* get you a small room with a fan.

When it comes to going to Muay Thai fights you can also expect to pay a whole lot less. In Phuket it's around 1200 baht per ticket, where in Chiang Mai it's about 400 baht. Also, massages run at an average of about 120 - 200 baht per hour session, compared to Phuket where you would be lucky to find anything under 300 baht. And lastly, renting a motorbike (and transportation in general) is also very affordable at around 3000 - 4000 baht per month.

The lifestyle in Chiang Mai is also conducive to saving money (and staying focused on your training) since there isn't much of a nightlife or other distractions as places like Phuket. Being in Northern Thailand means you are away from beaches, but close to beautiful nature preserves and traditional Thai villages, temples and jungles. Spending your time checking out the culture and natural beauty of the land will save you a buttload of money especially if you are prone to spending money going out every weekend in Phuket.

- CREATING A SAVINGS PLAN -

The sooner you start saving money, the sooner you will make it to Thailand. You will have to be frugal and make some hard sacrifices, but in the end, it will all be worth it when you are living your dream and training in Thailand.

There are a ton of things you can do to save money, but before I go over that, you need to make sure the following tasks are done before going any further:

ASSESS

Take a step back and look at your goals for living, training, and fighting in Thailand. Are they reasonable or are you dreaming too big? Make sure you are brutally honest with yourself otherwise this plan won't work. Come up with a general idea for how much your trip will cost using the information and sample budget I provided earlier.

SET GOALS

Your long term goal should obviously be whatever amount you need to make your trip to Thailand a reality. You should also have short term goals that progressively lead to your long term goals. Set short term savings goals and long term savings goals so you know what you are aiming for.

CALCULATE

Figure out your monthly income and your monthly expenses. Whatever amount you have left over should be the amount you put directly into your savings account specifically for Thailand. In order to calculate your monthly finances you will need to keep track of your spending habits and income for a month. If you need help with this, [mint.com](https://www.mint.com) is a free, very useful tool that I would highly recommend since I use it myself.

CREATE A SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Open up a savings account specifically for saving money for Thailand. Make sure it is set up easily to accept transfers from other accounts so you can constantly be feeding it any extra money you come across. I also recommend setting up a scheduled deposit (weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly) that transfers money from your checkings account to your savings. This is a great way to gradually and consistently build up your savings!

EXECUTE

Follow through with your plan and stay persistent. Simplify your life, minimize your expenses, and get into the habit of being frugal.

MONITOR

Make sure to occasionally reassess your savings plans and goals to see where they are headed. Can you cut spending somewhere else? Will it take longer than you initially planned? Again, be brutally honest and scrutinize your budget for possible adjustments.

PERSIST

Do not expect immediate returns. Like perfecting a certain technique, reaching your savings goal takes time, focus, and persistence. Remind yourself everyday why you are saving this money by posting pictures on your wall, saying daily affirmations, and reading blogs/websites about life in Thailand.

- MAKING AN INCOME IN THAILAND -

Your savings will only get you a limited amount of time in Thailand. If you want to live in Thailand permanently (or at least for an extended period of time) then creating an additional source of income is a must. In this section, you will learn a few different ways to go about making some money while you're in Thailand.

- START A BLOG -

Seriously, start a blog. If you are in it for the long run, starting a blog is a great idea to fund your travels and support your living in Southeast Asia. Even if you don't plan on doing it for long term, a blog is a great way to supplement your income and keep busy if you have any extra time.

Now, I might be a little bias since I have been lucky enough to start a blog as just a training journal and have it turn into one of the top Muay Thai sites online, but you better believe there is opportunity for you to make money online, as well.

When it comes to making money from a blog, let me get one thing straight before going any further -

It is *NOT* easy.

It takes up a lot of time, effort, and creative energy before you even begin to see any return on your investment. You will be putting in a ton of work without getting paid, without getting any feedback, and without any type acknowledgement. That being said, once people start reading your posts and you start to make a little bit of money, it can fuel your motivation and drive to keep it going.

A side note: *Keeping a blog and writing out your thoughts, insights, dreams and aspirations should be something you consider doing regardless whether or not you make money from it. Writing shit down helps focus on your goals and organize your thoughts, which in the long run will help in one way or another.*

So now you might be asking "how do I even go about starting a blog?"

Well that's what I'm here to do. Although I know a decent amount about starting a blog/website, I figure I should leave it to the professionals who spend all their time and energy in helping others create online businesses. Since there are a lot of "get rich quick" schemes out there, I wanted to point you in the right direction with some trusted websites and guides that I personally use and would recommend trying.

MY 5 RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR STARTING A BLOG

Site Build It! - This was the first program I used to start my website and without it, I wouldn't be where I am today. SBI provides you with detailed program filled with tutorials, forums, videos, how-to's and everything you could possibly need to succeed in starting a blog. This is ideal if you don't want to deal with many technical aspects of website building and has a great support system to help guide you throughout the process.

How To Start A Blog That Matters - I stumbled across this course later in my blog journey and I wish I found it earlier. This is an awesome step-by-step guide that will provide you with everything you need in order to start a blog that actually gets visitors and has the potential to make money. And you know the great thing about this course? *It's only \$1.*

How To Start A Blog: The Definitive Guide - This is another relatively detailed tutorial on how to start a blog that might be of use to you. It does a great job at providing you with most of what you need to know in terms of getting started, but it does lack the follow-up help that the other courses provide. This a good read to look over, but if you are more serious about starting a blog, the actual courses might do you better.

SmartPassiveIncome.com - Pat Flynn's website has been a goldmine for me and has helped me make my website what it is today. Not only is he a good, genuine guy, but he also knows what he's talking about and provides useful tutorials and tips to you help get started and continue on with your blogging journey.

Internet Business Mastery Podcast - This is one of many online entrepreneurship podcasts I listen to that give me great ideas and also help me evolve my online business. Their podcast is great, but they also have a beginner's course that helps people like you create an online business to give them the freedom and flexibility to do what they want. I personally haven't tried the course, but I have been listening to them for awhile and they do provide some awesome information and advice.

MAKE MONEY BY RECOMMENDING THIS GUIDE!

Whether you have a blog or not, you can still make money by recommending this guide to others! If you sign up to be an affiliate at clickbank.com and promote this guide

to your friends, training partners, and anyone else interested in going to Thailand, you would make 50% of the sale from anyone who purchased it from you!

- GET SPONSORED -

This isn't so much about making money as it is about funding your stay in Thailand. Being a sponsored fighter will help you keep from dipping too far into your savings and allow you to stay longer in Thailand with whatever money you have saved up.

There are certain gyms that will sponsor fighters by paying for their training and accommodation, but by no means are sponsorships easy to come by. As a sponsored fighter, the gym will take a percentage of your fight purse and expect you to fight often to pay for your stay, so expect to be active in the ring. Most gyms are picky when it comes to sponsorship and you have to prove your worth before even being considered. Here are some of the things you have to do to become a sponsored fighter:

WIN FIGHTS

You have to fight and you have to win. Not that you have to win every fight, but you need some kind of decent record to be considered as a sponsored fighter. If you have no record and no experience, don't even bother trying to get a sponsorship.

It doesn't matter how many Facebook likes or Twitter followers you have, if you're not fighting consistently, no gym will take you seriously. The most important thing a gym will look for is a dedicated, serious fighter who knows what to do when they step in the ring. Could you imagine how embarrassing it would be if a gym sponsored a fighter who had no idea what they were doing?

This is by far the most important criteria when gyms are looking to sponsor a fighter, so before you make a Facebook fan page or get t-shirts made, you better have a handful of fights under your belt.



CREATE A PORTFOLIO

Anyone can say that they are an amazing fighter with an undefeated record of 100-0, but if you have no proof, then how can anyone believe you?

If you are looking for a sponsorship, look to create a “portfolio” or “sponsorship package” that shows everything you have done in the sport. This should consist of:

- **A sponsorship letter.** This letter should show your interest in the specific gym you plan on asking for sponsorship. Make sure to have your fight information like your record, KO's, championships etc. but keep in mind that the main point of the letter is to showcase *how you can benefit them* by being a part of their gym. Explain to them why you would be a great addition to the gym, why you are a passionate fighter, and how you can help their team improve in one way or another.

- **Fight videos, highlights and photos.** Create a 1-2 minute highlight video of your fights showcasing your skills, toughness, and heart. You do not want it to be too long or drag on, so make sure you get to the point. Also share links to some of your full fight videos in case they wanted to see how you looked in the context of a fight.

- **Social media stats.** Having fans or followers helps promote the fact that you can give the gym more exposure. The more fans you have, the more people will see and hear about the gym you are sponsored by!

ATTITUDE

If you are a dick, most gyms don't want you to be a part of their team. If you are a humble, respectful fighter willing to do whatever the trainers tell you to do, then you are much more likely to land a sponsorship.

MARKETABILITY

Being a relatively well-known fighter who has a steady following is a good bargaining chip when it comes to asking for sponsorship. If you have social media platforms with a decent amount of fans or followers, you could use that as leverage when asking for a sponsorship. Most gyms are always looking for more exposure, and if you are able to give that to them through your online or offline presence, the more likely they would enjoy having you as a part of their team.

TRAIN AND FIGHT HARD

If you are at a gym in Thailand for long enough, there is a potential for sponsorship. Show enough dedication and toughness during the months you stay there by training

your ass off and fighting with heart, and it is very possible for you to become a sponsored fighter, just don't be afraid to ask!

- MAKE MONEY FIGHTING -

Living as a professional fighter in Thailand is no easy feat. Even if you were to fight as often as twice a month, it can still be a struggle getting by with such little income. Can it be done? Yes, definitely. Will it be fun and easy? No, not at all.

If you fight in Chiang Mai, the pay for your first fight usually ranges from 1500 baht - 3000 baht. In Phuket it's between 4000 - 6000 baht. With those figures in mind, remember that it is much cheaper to live in Chiang Mai than it is Phuket, so you're essentially being paid around the same amount.

Lumpinee champions must make a ton of money though... right? Wrong. Although they make more than the average fighter, they by no means make anywhere near the same amount as MMA fighters like Jon Jones or Anderson Silva. One Lumpinee champion gets paid around 60,000 baht per fight, which is equivalent to about \$2000 US. Add in the fact that they give *at least* 50% of that to their gym, and they are making pennies compared to MMA fighters.

With all of this in mind I hope you came to the realization that if you were to count on fighting as your only source of income, you would *barely* be getting by. Not only would you be barely getting by, but you would have fight often, not get injured, and live as frugally as possible. Chances are you will have to eat like a Thai (rice for breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and live like a Thai (in a dorm-style room with other fighters and no A/C).

If you are able to land a sponsorship, fight one-to-two times a month, stay healthy, live frugally, and deal with not having much luxuries, then you can probably make this lifestyle work. If you want a more comfortable way of life then I would either consider saving up a decent amount of money or find an additional source of income.

- TEACH ENGLISH -

Teaching English in Thailand is one of the most popular, reasonable ways to make a decent living while staying in Thailand to train. Although you do have to spend around the same amount of time in the classroom as you do the gym, the money you get from teaching will give you the ability to live, train, and fight in Thailand for as long as you choose to work.

There are a few requirements to consider and steps you need to take in order to make this situation work for you:

1) Get a TEFL. Having a well-known and recognized certification is the first, and most important step you need to take. Although having a college degree is recommended and will most likely make it easier for you to get a job, if you don't have at the very least a TEFL, you will have no chance. There are online courses for as little as \$100 (if you find a good deal) and in-class courses that you can take in your home country or in Thailand.

2) Research Jobs and Salaries. Jobs are always open for english teachers in Thailand, it is just about finding them and doing your research. One of the best websites to go to find a job is ajarn.com. Not only is it a great resource for finding jobs and comparing salaries, but it will also give you additional info in terms of what to expect teaching english in Thailand.

3) Begin The Job Hunt Online. Use resources like ajarn.com and thaivisa.com to check out job listings in the areas of Thailand you are considering moving to. Once you find a few jobs that interest you, email them your resume, cover letter, and recent photo for consideration. DO NOT accept a job before arriving in Thailand. You can very easily get trapped in a lower salary, higher demanding job with less benefits by taking this route. Your best option is to come to Thailand to finish your job hunt.

4) Go To Thailand, To Do The Real Hunting. Now that you are in Thailand, the real job search begins. First you can check out the jobs that you emailed to see if they are still available and meet your needs and expectations. Also consider checking out other language schools around the area to compare salaries, benefits, location and anything else that might sway your decision.

Make sure to dress nicely (like you are applying for a job) and make sure to bring your resume and recent photo. More often than not, you will get an interview on the spot and sometimes you might even get offered a job on the spot. Do not accept right away and make sure to weigh your options before making a final decision.

Some of the more popular language schools are www.eccthai.com, www.inhbangkok.com, www.inlinguathailand.com.

5) Review Your Options And Accept A Job. Once you have checked out several schools and handed in your employment application, now you can figure out which job fits your needs best. Which is closest to the gym? Which one pays the most? Do they offer paid holidays, insurance, or sick days?

Also, try to avoid the schools that offer 10-month contracts so they can skimp out on paying you for the 2 months of vacation during the year. The good schools will pay you year-round, so keep that in mind when deciding between jobs. Once you made your decision, call the school you want to work for and tell them you will accept their offer. Do not be surprised if they ask you to start working tomorrow since most schools are

desperate for teachers. Feel free to tell them you need a few days to get settled and more likely than not they'll wait for you.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH

There are plenty of forums and resources to find out more information about teaching english in Thailand. The most popular ones are the websites I mentioned earlier, ajarn.com and thaivisa.com. You can also check out the forums at lonelyplanet.com which tend to have very friendly people who are more than willing to answer any questions you might have.

I also know a handful of Nak Muay who have taken this route and talking with them gave me some great insight on how to make it work. Emma Thomas from undertheropes.com was able to share her experiences, advice, and insights on what it's like teaching English in Thailand while also pursuing her Muay Thai career. [Click here and go to episode 33 of the Muay Thai Guy podcast to give a listen to my interview with Emma.](#)

- OTHER JOBS -

The Thai government makes it very difficult for foreigners to get a job in Thailand, but there is still a possibility of landing a job other than teaching english as long as you have the right skills and perfect timing. Here is a list for some other jobs you might be able to land in Thailand:

- *Tour guide*
- *Divemaster*
- *Waiter/Bartender*
- *Promotional scout (hand out flyers etc.)*
- *Yoga teacher*
- *Translator*
- *Website designer/developer*

Like I said earlier, these jobs are few and far between, so I would not count on landing one of these jobs unless you were patient, persistent, and constantly keeping an eye out for them. Usually foreigners who land a job happen to just fall into it from being around the area long enough or knowing the right people.

Besides trying to find a local job in Thailand, you could also try your shot at freelancing online. If you enjoy writing or have other computer skills like programming, SEO, graphic design, editing or marketing, then chances are you'll be able to leverage those skills on websites like elance.com or odesk.com and make some extra cash to

fund your travels. You can even try out [fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com), just don't expect to make a killing from freelancing though!

- FUNDRAISING -

Another way to add some money to your savings account is to start a fundraiser. There are plenty of ways to go about this with the most modern one being in the form of online crowdfunding. Websites like [makeachamp.com](https://www.makeachamp.com) or [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) are great tools to use if you want to try to get some donations for your trip to Thailand.

Other than doing fundraising online, you can go the old school route and go door-to-door asking for donations after explaining why you want to travel and train in Thailand. Of course, you will get a lot of rejections, but it's worth a shot. You can also try to hold an event like a car wash, bingo night, or dinner to try to get more donations. It can be hard asking for free money from people, but if you are serious enough and passionate enough, you will find a way to make it work.

- TRAVEL HACKING -

I am an amateur when it comes to using travel hack techniques like using credit card points or finding great deals on flights, but fortunately there are plenty of travel websites that provide great information and tips on "travel hacking" to a ton of save money.

One of the best websites I would recommend checking out is [NomadicMatt.com](https://www.nomadicmatt.com). He has a lot of free information to help you figure out which credit cards to sign up for, which search engines to use to find deals on flights and much more. He also has a travel hacking e-book that provides even more in-depth knowledge about getting free flights and things of that nature. I have yet to buy it, but it's on my Christmas list!

- CHAPTER 3: TRAVELING -

Some people love the actual travel aspect of going to Thailand, some hate it. I'm the ladder. Although it can be a learning experience and you can make use of the actual time of travel, more often than not I find myself going insane. Fortunately (or unfortunately depending how you look at it), I've gone through the process enough times to get a good idea for what to expect and what to do to make it as stress free as possible. This chapter will provide you with everything you need to know to make your travels as seamless and easy as possible

- THE BEST TIME TO COME -

The best time to come is *RIGHT NOW*.

If you are reading this you obviously want to travel and train in Thailand, right? Well *right this moment as you read this text* is the time to **make the decision** that you will travel and train in motherland of Muay Thai. It doesn't matter what obstacles are stopping you from making the journey over, just make the definitive decision and tell yourself that nothing is going to stop you!

People are always making excuses to why they can't travel whether it be family, money, work, or hundreds of other reasons. Regardless of your reason or excuses, I can *100% guarantee* that someone who has the similar, or exact life situation as yours, has already made the trip over to Thailand and changed their lives by doing so.

There will always be reasons to not do something, and there will always be people telling you that you can't do something. The good thing is, you are in complete control of your life and once you realize that, you will be able to make things happen.

Okay, now that I got that off my chest, I can share with you what times of the year are "technically" the best times to come.

November to March - This is considered high season in Thailand and is when most of the tourists come to vacation due to the fact that it is not scorching hot or raining every day. With that in mind, renting a bungalow or hotel will most likely cost more because of the fact that it's high season. Regardless of where you go, there will probably be festivities going on and also be ideal weather during this time.

March to May/June - Considered hot season because of how hot it gets during this time... go figure. Temperatures are bearable for the most part, but can rise over 100 degrees fahrenheit easily. Add the fact that it does not rain much and it can feel like a desert at times. All that considered, I would still rather be in hot Thailand weather than cold NYC weather.

June to September/October - This is when the rain comes. Although it might get a bad rep by some, it usually means that the temperatures are cooler, the landscape is flourishing, and there are less tourists than any other time of the year.

Avoid Northern Thailand between February and May - Places like Chiang Mai get a ridiculous amount of smog pollution during this time and the air quality is at dangerously high levels.

- PASSPORTS -

Without a passport, you won't be able to go to Thailand, and that would be a bummer. So, in order to make your dreams of traveling to Thailand come true, one of the first thing you should do (if you haven't already) is get your passport!

Now, I am not 100% sure about what every countries' requirements are for applying for a passport is, but I am guessing that they are similar, if not exactly the same, as the requirements for a US passport. With that being said, here are the steps you need to take to apply and receive your passport.

1) Get your Proof of Citizenship. This will most likely be your birth certificate, but if you were born outside the US then a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, Naturalization Certificate, or Certificate of Citizenship is necessary.

2) Get your Proof of Identity. Such as a drivers license, military ID, or Naturalization Certificate.

Note: If you do not have one of those forms of ID, you will need two forms of secondary ID which include your social security card, credit card, or library card.

3) Get your passport photo. If you go to a local drug store or large chain grocery shop, more times than not they will have a streamlined process for you to get passport photos. The photo needs to be a particular size and must be visibly clear. You will also want to make sure to dress appropriately (no tank tops or sleeveless shirts you badass).

4) Fill Out The Forms. Usually this means to fill out a DS-11 form which asks for your information including name, address, Social Security Number etc. This can be filled at the place you submit the form or can easily be done online.

5) Submit form and documentation in person. If this is your first passport, you will have to submit everything in person. If you are renewing your passport, then you might be able to do it online depending on your circumstance. Go to your local passport authority or at a designated location (just google "passport locations" and you should be able to figure it out).

6) Pay the fee. In most cases your passport will cost around \$135, so be prepared to do so by either bringing cash, a money order, a paid check, or credit card.

Make sure to apply for your passport waaaaay ahead of time so you don't run into any issues where you have to cancel your trip to Thailand. There are expedited services that cost a bit extra, but you are much better off doing it sooner rather than later. Do not stress yourself out while waiting to see if your passport will arrive in time for your trip!

- VISAS -

When I first had to figure out the whole visa situation for my first trip, it was a bit overwhelming. Fortunately, getting a visa is not nearly as difficult as I first thought it would be. As long as you do a little bit of research and figure out exactly what you need to do, you should have no issues obtaining a visa. Oh, and by the way, I did all the research for you!

Before you jump ahead to applying for a visa, the first step is figuring out why you are going to Thailand and for how long you plan on staying there. The visa you apply for will be dependent on the purpose and duration of your stay, so knowing the details of your trip is important.

Below is a list of the different types of visas, how to apply for them and how long you can stay in Thailand with them.

- TYPES OF VISAS -

VISA ON ARRIVAL (15 - 30 DAYS)

If you plan on arriving without a visa, you are still able to obtain one. If you come into Thailand from the air, you will most likely receive a 30-day visa and if you arrive by land, it turns into a 15-day visa.

Generally speaking, you should have no issue getting approval for a visa when entering Thailand. However, you can be denied without proof of an onward ticket and insufficient funds for your stay. That being said, it's rarely checked and often looked over (although they are said to be cracking down on this more now).

To play it safe, whether you are staying for longer than 30 days or not, you are better off getting a Tourist Visa before you head to Thailand, not a visa on arrival.

How To Apply

You must have the following in order to apply for a visa on arrival:

- #1. Proof of money. Each person needs to have at least 10,000 baht to prove that they can support themselves during the trip. Each family needs 20,000 baht.
- #2. Proof of transport home. Usually meaning a plane ticket to anywhere outside of Thailand. If you get a 30-day visa on arrival, then your ticket must be within the 30 days (same goes for a 15-day visa).
- #3. Passport and recent photograph. You must attach a recent 2 1/2 inch photo to the visa application you fill out at the airport or international checkpoint.
- #4. 1000 baht for the visa application fee.

Keep in mind that if you enter Thailand with a Visa on Arrival, you most likely only be able to get an extension for a maximum of 7 days. Also, you will not be able to file an application for a longer extension except in special cases such as injury or illness that prevents you from traveling. Needless to say, if you plan on staying in Thailand for more than a month, you should get a Tourist visa.

TOURIST VISA (30-60 DAYS, LONGER WITH EXTENSION)

Applying for the tourist visa will most likely be your best and easiest option. There are two types of tourist visas you can apply for, single and multiple (double or triple) entry.

The single entry visa allows you to stay in Thailand for 60 days and it can then be extended in-country at any Immigration office at a cost of 1,900 baht. The extension usually is for 30 days, but there have been times where the extension may be only a week.

If you are staying longer than 90 days, then the multiple entry visa will probably be your best option. It is similar to the single entry except that after you extend your visa at the immigration office, you can leave the country and re-enter on the same visa. Most people travel to Malaysia, Laos, or Cambodia and stay for 2-3 days since the visa application takes a couple days to process. Three entries is the maximum allowed and would be ideal if you could obtain it. However, most Thai embassies and consulates have policies to only grant single or double entry visas.

How To Apply

In order to apply for a Tourist Visa, you need to find the closest Thai embassy or Thai consulate. You can also apply by mail or online. Check out visahq.com to find out how to apply online, by mail, or find out more about your countries application process.

- #1. Your passport carrying at least 6 or 9 months validity (depending on number of entries you will be applying for) with one blank visa page

- #2. Two 2" passport photos take within 6 months
- #3. Visa application form ([US Application](#) and [UK Application](#))
- #4. Proof of adequate funds in the amount equal to 20,000 baht for individuals and 40,000 baht for families (copy of your bank statement)
- #5. Proof of departure from Thailand within 60 days of arrival (copy of train ticket, plane ticket, etc.)
- #6. For single entry you need 1,200 baht processing fee (\$40 US). For double entry, it's 2,400 baht (\$80)
- #7. On occasion you need a short statement explaining why you need the extra time in Thailand.

With most visa applications, you need to leave your passport overnight while they process it. A smart idea (which my girlfriend actually brought to my attention) is to make a copy or two of my passport in case it were to get lost or misplaced at any point during our travels.

Once you receive your new Tourist Visa, you have 90 days to enter Thailand or your visa will expire, so make sure you get it relatively close to when you leave!

Extending Your Tourist Visa

After your initial 60 days is up, you can extend your tourist visa for another 30 days for a total of 90 days, by heading to a local Thai immigration office to apply for an extension. Make sure you know exactly when your initial 60 days are up, otherwise, expect to pay a fee of 500 baht (\$15) for every day you are late. And if you are way over-do for an extension, jail time is a real possibility.

It might be a smart idea to apply for an extension a week or two before the date your visa expires. The additional 30 days you are granted will be in addition to whatever date is stamped on your visa, not the day you apply for an extension.

To apply for an extension you need:

- #1. Your passport with a valid tourist visa.
- #2. Photocopies of the passports photo page, visa page, and immigration card.
- #3. 2 inch passport photo (make sure to cover your shoulders and look presentable).
- #4. [Extension of Temporary Stay Application Form \(TM.7\)](#) (print double-sided).
- #5. 1900 baht (\$60) extension fee.

The Thai immigration offices are often very busy and lines can be hours long, so you are best off arriving as early as possible otherwise it might take all day!

Re-Entry Permit Requirements

Obtaining a re-entry permit allow you to leave Thailand for a short duration and re-enter on the same visa. If you neglect to secure your re-entry permit before you leave

Thailand, you will end your visa and have to go through the whole process of obtaining a new one (unless you have another entry left to use). To avoid this, apply for a re-entry permit at a Thai immigration office before leaving:

You will need:

- #1. Passport with valid Tourist visa
- #2. Photocopies of the passports photo page, visa page, immigration card, and extension stamp (if you have one).
- #3. [Re-Entry Permit application \(form TM.8\)](#) (print double-sided)
- #4. A 2 inch passport photo
- #5. 1000 (\$30) baht for single re-entry, 3800 (\$120) baht for multiple re-entry.

It is possible that some countries' Thai Consulates have strict rules and will not grant you another tourist visa if you have already spent a consecutive 6 months in Thailand. To avoid this, make sure to stay up to date in the [ThaiVisa forum](#) to see recent reports and experiences from other travelers who were able to get new visas in certain neighboring countries. From the research I have done, places like Vientiane, Penang, and Kuala Lumpur seem to be the most friendly when it comes to granting new tourist visas to Thailand, but it is worth double checking before doing so.

What To Do If Your Tourist Visa Is Declined

However, if your application happens to be denied, there are a few things you can do.

- Fly into Bangkok and get a 30-day visa-exempt entry.
- Stay in another country for a few months until you are able to apply for another tourist visa.
- Apply for longer stay visas such as Educational, Retirement, or Work (see below).

STUDENT/EDUCATION VISA (1 YEAR - 15 MONTHS)

Another way to stay in Thailand for longer period of time is to get an education visa for study. If you decide on this route, you will most likely have to pay for a study course upfront which can range in price depending on what you choose.

One of the most common ways to get a Student Visa is to study the Thai language, which is probably a good idea since you will be in the country for awhile anyway. The cost for a year course (200 hours) is around 24,000 baht (\$800), which comparatively is just as much as if you were to do visa runs to re-apply for visas. It also won't take up too much of your time, being that you could probably take around 1-2 classes a week to reach your 200 hours.

[Click here to check out a few Thai language schools](#)

You can also choose to take courses to study Thai culture, Thai music, or TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). There have also been instances where

fighters have been able to get an educational visa to study Muay Thai using a letter of recommendation from a training camp. However, there will be a lot of paperwork, you will be committed to the school for 1 year, and there will be a good chunk of costs upfront.

Steps To Apply For A Student Visa

#1. Apply for a course of study in Thailand. Do your research and think about what you would like to learn during your stay. If you would like to try to get a visa to study Muay Thai, your best bet is to get in contact with camps to see if they would be able to help you with the process. You can also choose between other courses like language, massage, meditation, Thai cooking, and others.

Once you have decided what you would like to study, you need to send in an application form to the school of your choice along with the requested paperwork and wait to see if they decide to accept you.

#2. Receive your letter of recommendation. Ideally, in a few weeks of applying for your course of study, you will receive a Letter of Admission. It *must* be printed on the schools letterhead and show the exact start date of the course you plan to attend. If you receive an email of acceptance, that is most likely not going to be enough to receive a Student Visa, so make sure you get an actual letter of acceptance before applying.

#3. Send application for Education Visa to Thai embassy/consulate. You need to either take or mail a photocopy of your passport picture page, your passport, four 2x2 inch passport sized photographs and [a completed visa application form](#) to any Thai embassy or consulate. Make sure you send everything by registered mail (if you mail it) and be ready to wait a few weeks before your passport with an Education Visa, so make sure you give yourself time before the course begins. Also keep in mind that the visa is only valid for 90 days, so you have to arrive in Thailand before the 90 days is up.

#4. Go to Thailand! Once you have both your passport and Education Visa, you can now enter Thailand anytime you want within the 90 days. Once you arrive, the visa will be activated and your first 90 days will start from that day. Your best option is to get it extended to one year as soon as possible so you don't have to worry about not getting it within the 90 days and then have to do a visa run and apply for another Education Visa.

#5. Register at your school of study. Once you arrive in Thailand, you will have to register and pay all the fees for tuition as soon as possible. After you are registered and paid, you will receive a Registration Letter and receipt which you can now bring to a Thai immigration office to extend to a full year.

#6. Extend your visa for a year. Bring your Registration Letter and receipt to the nearest Thai immigration office and apply for extend your visa... boom, simple. It might be done while you wait, or you might have to come back in a day or two until it's processed. There will be a small fee, but once you have it you will be good for a year!

Important Note: Whatever course you decide on, you *must* continue to attend. If you decide to skip school, it is likely you will be reported to immigration and will have your Education Visa canceled. This will make your trip a lot more difficult, expensive and stressful since you will most likely have a tough time at the airports and have to pay a hefty fee. Don't be that asshole.

BUSINESS/WORK VISA (1 YEAR)

If you are hoping to teach English in Thailand, Thai consulates no longer issue Non-Immigrant Business Visa's without an employment contract from a school. If you have a job lined up, then you have nothing to worry about. If you will be looking for a job in Thailand, then your best option is to apply for a Tourist Visa and then work with your employer to receive a Work Visa.

How To Apply

In order to apply for a Tourist Visa, you need to find the closest Thai embassy or Thai consulate. You can also apply by mail or online. Check out visahq.com to find out how to apply online, by mail, or find out more about your countries application process.

- #1. Your passport carrying at least 6 or 9 months validity (depending on number of entries you will be applying for) with one blank visa page
- #2. Two 2" passport photos take within 6 months
- #3. Visa application form ([US Application](#) and [UK Application](#))
- #4. Your contact and address in Thailand
- #5. Proof of departure from Thailand within 60 days of arrival (copy of train ticket, plane ticket, etc.)
- #6. Fees are different based on your country. Refer to the consulates website for details.

[For more detailed help and FAQ's on Business/Work Visa, click here.](#)

- PRE-THAILAND DOCTOR CHECK-UP -

Whether you are a sexy stud in peak physical condition or an overweight couch potato, you should get check-up before you head to Thailand. Not only is it important to see what type of health you are in, but it is important to update any vaccinations and ask about other immunizations before traveling abroad.

When it comes to your health, you can never be too careful. Getting blood work done, as well as, a routine physical examination is super important, especially if you plan on fighting while you are in Thailand. Normally in the states they will run you through a pre-

fight check-up to make sure you are healthy enough to fight, but in Thailand a majority of fight promotions do not take precautions when it comes to testing the athletes before or after the fights (with the exception of top stadiums like Lumpinee and Rajadamnern). Taking your own precautions is crucial in making sure you stay healthy and fit during your time in Thailand.

Along with a routine doctor check-up, it is a good idea to also bang out appointments with your eye doctor, dentist, and other health professionals to make sure everything is in good standing.

- VACCINATIONS -

I've put vaccinations into two categories. The first one is a list of vaccinations you should probably get, and the other list are the ones to consider depending on your situation.

IMPORTANT NOTE: I am *NOT* a doctor and am only giving my recommendations based on personal experience and research. It is *super* important to ask your doctor about vaccinations before traveling as well as doing your own independent research.

VACCINATIONS YOU PROBABLY SHOULD GET

Routine vaccinations - Make sure you are up to date with your normal vaccinations which can include flu shot, polio, chickenpox, measles-mumps-rubella, and others of the same variety.

Hepatitis A - Most travelers visiting Thailand should get this vaccination because it is possible to get Hepatitis A through contaminated food and water, regardless of where you eat and stay.

Typhoid - Like Hepatitis A, getting your Typhoid shot is recommended because it is possible to get typhoid through contaminated food and water.

VACCINATIONS TO CONSIDER AND ASK ABOUT:

Hepatitis B - If you are getting tattoos or planning on going on sexual adventures while you are in Thailand, getting a Hepatitis B shot might not be a bad idea.

Malaria - Mosquitoes are a bitch and they are everywhere in Thailand. You may want to take a medication before, during and after your travels to prevent malaria, especially if you are planning on spending a lot of time sleeping outside.

Rabies - Getting rabies isn't a major risk, however, if you plan on working with a lot of animals or spending long periods of time in remote areas of Thailand, you might want to consider a shot to prevent it.

Japanese Encephalitis - If you plan on spending a lot of time outdoors in the rural areas of Thailand, consider asking your doctor about getting a shot to prevent Japanese Encephalitis.

- TRAVEL INSURANCE -

When it comes to traveling abroad, one of the most confusing, stressful topics has to do with insurance. The goal for this section is to answer frequently asked questions about travel insurance and give you recommendations for how you should go about getting it.

Q: What is the difference between health and travel insurance?

A: Health insurance is usually medical expenses covered only in your home country. Depending on the type of travel insurance you choose, it will cover medical expenses when you are overseas as well as numerous other things (lost luggage, canceled flights etc.).

Q: What is travel insurance and why should I buy it?

A: Travel insurance is a package of insurance coverage and travel assistance services that provide you with emergency medical help before and during your travels. Accidents happen, things get lost, and people get sick, so it is best to be prepared in case any of those situations were to happen.

Q: Are there different types of travel insurance plans?

A: Oh yea, there are a few. When you are deciding between plans, make sure to read what they do and do not cover because it will make a big difference. Here are some things you can expect to come across:

A comprehensive travel medical insurance plan is for people who do not have any type of insurance back at home. This is ideal for long term travelers or those living and working outside their country of citizenship.

Emergency travel medical insurance is for people who have health insurance back home that does not cover them when they are traveling. Most health insurance plans in the USA have specific provisions for emergency medical care abroad, so it is important to look into your own coverage before dropping the extra cash on something that is already covered.

Medical evacuation covers an extreme circumstance where you are badly injured where you cannot make it home or get to a medical treatment center. It will usually

cover the cost of an air ambulance, as well as, the doctor and treatments you receive. However, make sure you read the fine print because there are exemptions such as “extreme sports” - which Muay Thai may be listed under.

Trip cancellation and interruption insurance will cover the costs of your cancelled trip if you become ill or a family member dies. There are other instances where your costs will be covered as well, just make sure to read the fine print.

Q: Does most travel insurance cover Muay Thai?

A: Not usually, so find out if it does before you buy a plan. That being said, if you get a travel insurance plan that doesn't cover extreme activities like Muay Thai and you were to break your arm in training or a fight, you might want to make up a different story to how that happened when you make a claim.

Q: Is travel insurance expensive?

A: If you look in the right places it generally is affordable and reasonably priced, plus it covers everything you could need while traveling. To keep things in perspective think of it this way; if you were to skimp on travel insurance and get injured or miss a flight because you are sick, you would pay *at the very least double* the cost of whatever insurance plan you decided against. The cost is peanuts in comparison to what you would pay if something were to happen.

Q: What travel insurance company should I use?

A: That is a loaded question that is completely dependent on you as an individual as well as your budget. I understand that there are plenty of travel insurance companies to choose from, but doing your own independent research will be key in not only making the right decision, but also knowing what to expect from the insurance company.

If I were to recommend one travel insurance company it would be the one I use called **World Nomads** (www.worldnomads.com). It's affordable, covers everything I need, and even though I've never had to use it, I've heard good things about their customer service and claims center. However, I don't believe they cover Muay Thai, so it's a bit of a risk.

For my trip in 2014, I paid upfront for a 6-month plan that *included my girlfriend* and covered basically everything was only \$772 bucks (that's only \$386 per person or \$64 per month).

Depending on where you live, there are a handful of other travel insurance companies to choose from other than World Nomads. Here is a list of other companies to consider:

- *International Medical Group*
- *Travel Guard International*
- *Bupa Travel Insurance*
- *Travelex*
- *AirMed International*

Q: Should I get travel health insurance?

A: Would I recommend a travel health insurance plan? Yes. Is it absolutely 100% necessary? No. But I would still highly recommend it because shit happens when you are expecting it the least and it is best to be prepared.

I have read and heard stories of people who skipped out on insurance and then missed a flight due to sickness or got into an accident which ended up costing an arm and a leg in medical bills. If you get the right travel insurance it will cover those types of expenses and it really barely puts a dent in your savings. Most importantly, it will give you the peace of mind while traveling and training that you would not have if you were to just wing it.

If you decided against health insurance, Thailand's health system does a pretty good job at keeping everyone in the country safe and healthy. The cost of most things (check-ups, medicine, some surgeries) in the US *with insurance* will cost about the same, if not cheaper in Thailand *without insurance*. However, that is not always the case, so do not just assume you will get quality care for cheap.

Having an additional backup plan for emergencies when it comes to your health and travels is never a bad idea!

- HOW TO PACK FOR THAILAND -

The time has come for you to start packing for your life in Thailand, but where do you start? It can be very tempting to pack everything you own, but take it from me, the lighter you pack the easier your travels will be (especially if you plan on traveling all around the country).

Before you even start packing, I would *highly* recommend investing in some quality luggage to carry over to Thailand. Spending the extra cash on durable, long-lasting luggage will save you money and stress in the long run. You do not want to be the asshole who has to pick up all his belongings in the middle of an airport because the zipper on your crappy duffel bag broke... it's the worst!



When I travel to Thailand, I use 3 bags which include a backpack, duffel bag, and gym bag. Although, with most airlines I have to pay for the additional checked bag (around \$20-\$50), I found this to be the easiest and most efficient way to carry everything around and it also gives me enough room to pack everything I could possibly need. If you like the traditional luggage you can't really go wrong with that either, I just find it easier to carry duffel bags that have rollers on the bottom.

If you don't want to pay the additional luggage fee, you can cut it down to one large duffel bag and one carryon, but you will have to limit what you pack. My advice would be to just bring your boxing gloves, cup, and mouth guard with you because most gyms will have other equipment to use.

Also, keep in mind that you can buy almost everything you need in Thailand and usually it's far cheaper than back home. If for whatever reason you can't fit some of your clothes or other miscellaneous things in your baggage, no need to worry because chances are you will be able to pick it up once you get settled in Thailand.

Lastly, if you plan on buying things to bring home for your family and friends (or for yourself) make sure you leave some room in your luggage! If you over-packed, bought tons of souvenirs, and can't fit anything in your bags, you can take another route and mail things back home, instead.

- PACKING LIST FOR THAILAND -

CLOTHING

One of the most commonly over-packed things when traveling is *clothing*. I am sure you have some shirts you can't imagine living without, but do not feel like you have to pack your entire wardrobe when you head to Thailand. Most of the clothing you need you should be able to buy for good prices over in Thailand anyway!

Shorts

This means a variety of shorts. You'll be wearing shorts a majority of the time you are there so packing a mixture of mesh, dress, and workout shorts might be a good idea. I typically bring around 6-8 pairs.

Shirts

Honestly, shirts are overrated, especially if you are in the southern part of Thailand. That being said, I guess it is important to have some shirts to wear on rainy days. Pack a variety of shirts that can be used for various activities like working out, relaxing, and going out. If you are training, you will almost never wear a shirt, but it is good to have a few just in case. I tend to bring around 5 of my favorite shirts, but rarely do I ever wear them.

Tank tops/singlets

Like I said, any type of shirt is overrated in Thailand, but having a decent amount of tank tops is probably a good idea.

Jeans

You don't really need jeans, but if you can fit them in your bag for special occasions it wouldn't hurt.

Sweatpants

Believe it or not, Thailand can get rather cold and wet during some parts of the year (in the northern parts, at least). Not to mention traveling on buses and trains can get pretty chilly, too. I bring one pair of sweatpants for those rainy, wet days where you want to stay warm and comfy.

Underwear

Usually I would say underwear is overrated too, but it is probably a good idea to pack a decent amount. If you train twice a day, that is two pairs of underwear that you will go through. Do that 5-6 times a week and you will run out of underwear pretty quickly, and you do not want to be that guy who free balls it underneath his Thai shorts... that's just nasty.

Hats/Bandanas

The sun and heat can be pretty brutal in Thailand, so shading your beautiful face from the sun might not be a bad idea. They will have plenty of hats and bandanas to choose from in Thailand, but you might want to bring some of your favorites over if you have any.

Sunglasses

It's sunny in Thailand.

Socks

Sandals will be your main footwear, but when you decide to strap on some shoes you are going to need some socks.

Sandals

A comfy, durable pair of sandals goes a long way, especially if you are like me and wear them almost everywhere you go.

Shoes

Having a nice pair of running shoes is important since you will be doing a decent amount of roadwork (or at least, you should be). Besides that, having another pair of shoes for other occasions is a good idea too. Do not pack too many shoes though because they are bulky and take up a lot of room.

Rain Coat

It rains a ton in Thailand and when it rains, it rains *hard*. You can bring your own rain jacket or get one there, but either way make sure you have one!

Bathing suit

Hot weather, plus beautiful beaches makes, it almost a necessity to take a dip the ocean.

MUAY THAI EQUIPMENT

Another smart thing to do is invest in your training equipment. Since you will be training pretty often, you are going to want to make sure your gear is durable, comfortable, and offers you protection. You can get pretty good deals on equipment in Thailand, so if you have crappy equipment now, you can still wait until you make the voyage over.

With that being said, most gyms (especially the ones catered more towards tourists) will have their fair share of equipment that you can use as well. If you don't mind putting on used gloves or shin guards, then this might work for you, but I would still recommend using your own for health and safety reasons.

Below I listed the training equipment you should pack along with my recommendations of the best brands to choose from. If you would like a more in-depth breakdown for why I like certain brands of gear, [check out my reviews here](#).

Gym bag

Having a durable gym bag is important, especially if you constantly have to carry your training equipment and gear around. My girlfriend bought me a ['Fighting' gym bag](#) that has been decent, but it ripped at the seams after I over packed it (it was probably my fault it broke), but it is still a great bag and I use it to this day.

Other bags I would recommend just from asking around the Muay Thai community is the [Top King](#), [Twins Special](#) and [Fairtex brands](#). Like I mentioned earlier, you can't go wrong with any of the training equipment from those brands.

Muay Thai shorts

At first, I dreaded wearing Muay Thai shorts, and all I would wear was MMA shorts to cover my white, skinny legs. But when my first fight was in Thailand, I knew that I had to make the change to Thai shorts, otherwise I would be one of those assholes fighting Muay Thai in Thailand with MMA shorts. After that fight, I realized my legs looked sexy as hell!

Picking Thai shorts can be tough, and each brand has a different sizing chart that you need to consider before buying. Some shorts are K-1 style, others are traditional Muay Thai style (they kind of flair out more). I personally like the K-1 style more, but I also have a good amount of traditional shorts. If you do not have any Thai shorts before you head to Thailand, your best option is to probably check out your gyms store and try out their shorts.

Boxing gloves

Obviously you are going to need a quality pair of boxing gloves. Do not get that shitty Everlast or Title gloves, invest in brands like [Top King](#), [Twins Special](#), Yokkao, and other Muay Thai brands.

Hand Wraps

Most people tend to go with the generic brands of [Everlast](#) and [Title](#), which is fine and all, but I know from experience that they do not last as long and the quality of the wraps are not even close to the quality that top Muay Thai training equipment brands like [Top King](#) and [Twins Special](#) have to offer.

Shin guards

Most gyms will have extra pairs of shin guards and boxing gloves, but you are better off having your own for safety, cleanliness, and comfort. I am a big fan of my [Top King](#) shin guards but have also have gotten good used out of [Fairtex](#) and [Twins Special](#) brands as well.

Mouth guard

I have used a couple different types of mouth guards throughout my athletic career in hockey and Muay Thai, but none have been as comfortable or breathable as the [Shock Doctor](#) I currently use. Do not skimp on a mouth guard because it will make a huge difference in your health.

Steel cup

They are not as comfortable as compression shorts, but they will protect your junk a lot better. Take it from someone who has been kicked or kneed in the balls in over 20 fights, buy a steel cup from either [Twins Special](#) or [Bad Boy](#).

Headgear

There is a great debate about headgear where one side says it is an important piece of safety equipment while the other side says it does more harm than good. In Thailand you won't see many people wearing headgear, but if you decide to buy some of your own, you can't go wrong with [Twins Special](#) or [Top King headgear](#).

Elbow Pads

Having a pair of elbow pads to work on your elbows inside and outside the clinch is key to become more comfortable throwing them in a fight. The two brands of elbow guards I have used the most are Boon and Venum. The [Boon elbow pads](#) are really tight and

snug, but they do cut off some circulation from my arms which can cause my hands to drop.

The [Venum elbow pads](#) are the ones I ended up going with because they are more comfortable, cheaper, and I have also used them during a fight. They don't suck the blood out of my arms as much, but I still ripped the elastic to give me arms more space.

Anklelets

This is by no means, a necessity, but a lot of fighters love wearing anklelets to help with comfort. This is another piece of equipment that would be easy to pick up at a shop in Thailand.

ELECTRONICS

Laptop

Keeping in touch with family and friends back home has never been easier than nowadays with the internet. Having a laptop on your trip will make life a lot easier when it comes to documenting your journey, sharing it with friends, and keeping in touch with people at home. If you don't want to bring your laptop, there are plenty of internet cafes in most cities.

Kindle

If you plan on doing a decent amount of reading during your stay in Thailand, buying a kindle is a great idea. Instead of packing a handful of books that will take up space and add weight to your luggage, buying a small, sleek kindle will make packing and even buying new books so much easier! If you think you are going to do a decent amount of reading, you should [buy an affordable kindle on the Amazon store!](#)

Camera

Neglecting to take pictures and videos of your travels is the biggest mistake you can make. Trust me, you are going to want to relive your journey and have some kind of visual record of your time training Muay Thai in Thailand. If you invest in a [solid camera](#) and [a tripod](#) you can get some beautiful pictures that your camera phone won't be able to handle.

iPad

Basically a camera, laptop, and kindle all in one. If you want to pack light then investing in [an iPad](#) is a smart idea.

Cell phone

Bringing your cell phone or purchasing one in Thailand is a good idea if you want to make things easier on yourself. I didn't have a phone the first time I traveled to Thailand, and although I was fine without one, it would have made my life easier to have one.

Roaming charges are a *bitch* though, so make sure you read the [section on cell phones](#) so you know how to get a SIM card and not be overcharged for local (and international) calls.

iPod or MP3 player

If you do not have your music on your phone, then having a portable MP3 player of some sort is a good idea for running, relaxing on the beach, or even hitting the heavy bag.

Headphones

What good is an MP3 player if you don't have headphones to listen to it? You can choose between a running pair of headphones (preferably sweat resistant), or a quality pair like these [Bose headphones](#) which are perfect for your plane ride over.

Power adapter

Power outlets in Thailand are generally different than the ones used back in the US and without any type of power adapter, you will not be able to use any of your electronic equipment. [Power adapters are super cheap](#) so make sure you pick one up before you leave!

External Hard Drive

If you are like me and use your computer for a lot of things, having an external hard drive will make life a lot easier. If you are taking a lot of pictures or videos and you want to keep them on your computer, chances are a small USB memory stick won't do the job. Plus having this as a backup can soften the blow incase your laptop gets lost or stolen.

[Beard Trimmer](#)

If your beard gives you strength like mine does, then keeping care of it is one of the most important aspects of your life. Even if you don't have a beard, you should consider investing in an electric razor if you want to keep your face smooth like a baby's bottom.

External Speaker

Music can dramatically improve my mood, especially when it's blasting loudly in my small bungalow. Instead of using headphones to contain the noise, I like using my [wireless bluetooth speaker](#) to share the love!

TOILETRIES

Most large department stores (ie. Target, Cosco etc.) have small, travel-sized versions of all the toiletries listed below. You do not necessarily have to buy mini-sized everything, but if you need room in your luggage it is a good alternative to over-packing. And like I have said numerous times, you can buy almost everything you need in Thailand.

- *Toothbrush*

- *Toothpaste*
- *Hand sanitizer*
- *Razors*
- *Deodorant*
- *Body soap/Body wash*

MISCELLANEOUS

Day Pack

Having a small backpack or nylon drawstring bag will be useful when you take a trip into town or to the beach and need to carry some essentials with you.

Dramamine

I get motion sickness like no other, and without Dramamine I would be throwing up on everyone in the mini-bus from the airport to my Muay Thai training camp. If you get motion sickness too, having some Dramamine handy will save you and your travel buddies some discomfort.

Ibuprofen

Your training is going to be intense, and if you fight, that will be rough on your body, as well. Having some ibuprofen to help with the swelling and pain will help you get back into training as soon as possible.

Tiger Balm

Sore back? Beat up shins? Tiger balm is a great remedy to help alleviate muscle pain, bruises, and swelling. Tiger balm can be found in pretty much all pharmacies in Thailand.

Thai Liniment

An absolute necessity for a Muay Thai fighter. It helps the increase blood flow throughout your body and loosens you up before training sessions and fights. Instead of packing some, you are probably better off buying a bottle when you arrive.

Aspirin

Do I really need to explain why you should have aspirin?

Antibiotic cream

Infections are very real and could do some serious damage if not taken care of immediately. Having antibiotic cream for scrapes, cuts, and other injuries could mean the difference of being healthy or ending up in the hospital.

Vitamins + Supplements

Chances are that your diet in Thailand is going to be vastly different than your diet back at home. You will be missing out on a handful of key nutrients, vitamins and minerals, so

making sure you add vitamins and other supplements to your daily routine is important to stay healthy and energetic for training. However, Thailand is pretty strict on this matter so make sure you [read up on the supplement section in this guide!](#)

First aid kit

Head over to a camping store and you will most likely find a compact first aid kit that has everything you need in case of an emergency. Do not assume you will be perfectly healthy your entire trip while you are in Thailand, because you won't. *Be prepared!*

Thai phrase book

If not a book, then downloading apps on your phone or tablet is a great idea for when you are out in town trying to communicate with locals. Learn the basics and read over the "[Thai vocabulary](#)" section of this guide for important words and phrases.

Extra batteries, chargers

Electronics die. Nuff' said.

Copy of passport

Losing your passport would suck, but losing your passport without a photo copy would suck a hundred times more. Make copies of your passport and other important documents in case you lose or misplace them!

Sunscreen

I'm a white boy and turn red like a lobster when I am in the sun for 5 minutes or longer. Without sunscreen I probably would have already died due to over exposure to the sun. Also, skin cancer is no joke and making sure you are protected from UV rays is no laughing matter.

Aloe vera

If you forget to put on sunscreen, you are going to need to ease your pain and suffering by rubbing some soothing aloe vera on your burns.

Condoms/Lady Products

Although you can find this stuff most places in Thailand, it can actually be rather expensive. If you bring your own condoms or feminine products over, it can save you a few bucks.

Bug Spray

Bugs are a pain in the ass no matter where you go, so make sure you either pack some or pick some up once you arrive.

- GENERAL TRAVEL TIPS -

- HOW TO STAY SANE ON A LONG ASS FLIGHT ACROSS THE GLOBE -

Traveling from New York to Thailand is a *nightmare*. Ok, maybe not a nightmare, but it still sucks. Between the layovers and actual flight time, most of my trips to Thailand have averaged out to around 30+ hours of travel time... which is a long damn time!

One of the most important things you can do is be prepared to hate life for a couple days. You will get jet-lagged, tired, hungry, constipated, anxious, twitchy, nervous, and deal with a ton of other unpleasant feelings. But shit happens, so deal with it. Try to make the most of your time while you're traveling and keep reminding yourself how much it will be worth it once you finally arrive to your final destination in beautiful Thailand!

That being said, I know that being cramped on a plane and being fed airline "food" is not the most enjoyable experience. Fortunately, since I've had multiple flights to Thailand, I've got a good idea for what to expect and how to prepare to make the most of the flights. Here are a few tips for staying sane during your travels to Thailand.

- 6 PACKING TIPS FOR FLYING TO THAILAND -

1. Get A Natural Sleep Aid - Sleeping is key in making the time go by. With that being said, it can be hard to fall asleep on a plane, especially if there is a crying baby next to you or you happen to be flying through a lot of turbulence. Do yourself a favor and get some kind of natural sleep aid like melatonin to help you make it through the flight.

I personally use melatonin and that seems to do the job, but I know people who have gone to the doctors and straight up told them they have trouble flying and need something to help them get through the long flight. I am not saying to abuse sleeping aids, but consider using one if you have a 16 hour flight.

2. Buy A Kindle - I do not know what I would do without my Kindle. It has been one of the best presents I have ever gotten because of how convenient and useful it is. Instead of packing a ton of books (which are heavy and take up a lot of space) I have a little electronic book where I can download hundreds of good reads. So far, I've read a couple books, with my favorite being *The Art Of Mental Training* by DC Gonzalez.

3. Pack Snacks – Airline food sucks. I keep thinking it will get better but it never does, except for the occasional brownie. Be smart and pack some granola bars and snack foods for your trip, otherwise you will be forced to eat whatever type of "food" the airline supplies you. Also keep in mind that the TSA has restrictions on certain items, and will make you throw out your brand new coconut water if it's larger than 4oz... bastards.

4. Bring Medicine – I get sick whether I am in a car, boat, or plane, so packing some Dramamine, aspirin, and other medicine has been key in keeping me from puking all over. Also, consider packing some Pepto-Bismol if you are going to eat the airline “food.” Just keep in mind that most airports will take anything away that is over 4oz.

5. Buy Noise Canceling Headphones – I have yet to invest in these (because they are kind of expensive) but if I had them during my flights I know it would make the experience less stressful. Plus, if you have a snorer next to you, or even worse, a crying baby, then these suckers will be a life saver.

6. Use a Neck Pillow – If you plan on getting some good sleep, the airline pillows won’t do you justice. Buying a comfortable neck pillow will allow you to fall asleep easier and give your neck a cushiony support so you don’t wake up with any strains or cramps. A neck pillow will also be useful if you plan on traveling throughout Thailand on busses or trains.

- 5 THINGS TO DO ONCE YOU ARRIVE -

Drink a lot of water and eat some normal food - Chances are you will be a bit dehydrated and hungry after your flights, so the best thing you can do is fuel your body with what it needs. Make sure you do not drink Thailand’s water from the tap, otherwise you will have to lock yourself in the bathroom for a few days.

Get a SIM card for your phone - If you want to have internet access and be able to make local calls without paying for roaming, then getting a SIM card for your smart phone is a must. You have to unlock or jailbreak your phone (or buy a new one) prior to getting a SIM card, so make sure you read up on how to go about it before you try.

Adjust your sleeping patterns - Depending on when you arrive, you will want to immediately get into a normal sleep pattern if possible. If you go to sleep in the middle of the day once you get off the plane, you will wake up in the middle of the night and have your sleep schedule all kinds of fucked up. Your best bet is to suck it up and try your hardest to go through a normal day, otherwise you will be fighting jet lag for a lot longer than you would like.

Get a massage - After sitting on a plane for 20+ hours, sleeping on a bench in the airport and developing aches and pains almost everywhere on my body, one of the first things I did after I got to my room was find the nearest massage parlor... and holy shit was it worth it! Do yourself a solid and treat yourself to a 300 baht (\$10) massage to work out all the knots that developed during your trip.

Explore the area – Knowing what is around your area will make life a whole lot easier when you decide to do some shopping whether it’s for food or souvenirs. Find out where

the best food vendors or restaurants are, and also keep an eye out for pharmacies, 7-11's, food marts, massage parlors and other places where you will want to visit regularly.

- USING A PHONE IN THAILAND -

Having a phone in Thailand is important, but it is not an absolute necessity. If you like the idea of having a smart phone to keep your social media accounts up-to-date, or if you want a phone for the simple reason to call people, there are a couple ways to go about it. Here are the things you need to know about using a phone in Thailand:

Unlocking Your Phone - Unlocking your phone simply means giving it the freedom to be used by different service providers outside the company you currently use. Depending on the model and phone company, it can either be an extremely easy process, or not possible at all. If you are a US citizen, chances are it will be impossible to unlock your phone because... 'merica! Check the terms of services of your carrier to see if unlocking your phone is doable.

However, if you are lucky enough to be able to unlock your phone, then all you have to do is buy a Thai SIM card and connect to a Thai network to start making calls and using 3G.

Buying A Phone In Thailand - You can buy a phone for as little as \$3 (a cell phone from the stone ages) and use that during your stay. You can also spend a little more money and buy an unlocked smart phone, as well as a SIM card, and connect to a Thai network. There are plenty of cell phone stalls and tech shops in the airport or shopping centers that will have more than enough options to choose from.

How To Get A Thai Cell Phone Service - It is easy as hell. Once you have your own phone (either your own phone unlocked, or a purchased one from in Thailand) all you have to do is go to any phone shop or 7-11 and purchase a SIM card. There are a variety of providers to choose from, but I am don't think anyone is better than the other (my girlfriend uses AIS and they've been fine).

Using The SIM Card - Now you got the SIM card, how do you use it? Most SIM cards come with a small amount of telephone time (15-30 minutes), but you can buy phone cards from the same company you got the SIM card from to add more time it.

To install the SIM card, just take your old SIM card out and slip it in the new one. Take the phone card you got, enter the user ID and password from the back into your phone, then follow whatever prompts come up. Now you should be good to go!

Calling Home - Most people want to keep in contact with some family and friends back home and I have found the easiest way to do this is through Skype or another form of online call (Google Hangout, Facetime, etc.). It is usually free (or ridiculously cheap)

and you are able to actually see the person you are calling. Set it up before you go and get the people you want to keep in touch with to set it up, as well, I promise you will be glad you did!

- CHAPTER 4: LIVING -

Living (or at least spending some kind of time) in Thailand is something that I feel everyone should experience at least once in their life. Besides the great Muay Thai training, you will also get to experience the people, culture, food, beauty, and traditions that are unique to Thailand.

The following chapter will break down what to expect when you are living in Thailand. You will learn everything you need to know to make sure you have a great time during your stay, including:

- *Cultural norms*
- *Dealing with Thai police*
- *Best foods and Thai dishes*
- *What to expect eating in Thailand*
- *Basic Thai words and phrases*
- *Scams to avoid*
- *Dangers to be aware of*
- *General touristy things to do*

- CULTURAL NORMS -

Needless to say, it is not the best idea to disrespect the Thai people in their home country. Before heading over to Thailand to live, train, and fight, there are certain cultural norms and difference that you need to be aware of.

Do not just glance over these either! Respect is an important aspect of not only Thailand, but of the sport of Muay Thai as well. Do your best to be as respectful as possible by being aware of what the Thai people consider disrespectful so you don't offend any of your Thai trainers or other Thai people you run into on a day to day basis.

Check out the following list of do's and don'ts for when you are in Thailand.

- 10 CULTURAL DO'S AND DON'TS IN THAILAND -

1. DON'T Ever, Ever, Disrespect The King. The King is the face of Thailand and all the Thai people love their King through the good times and the bad. Disrespecting this man (or any of the Thai royalty) is a big no-no and should be avoided at all costs. So, when at Muay Thai fights or movie theaters when there is an announcement asking you to stand up to pay respect to the King, you better do it.

Also, keep in mind that all the Thai currency (baht) has an image of the King on it. Because of this fact, make sure you avoid crinkling up your bills and stashing money in your shoe (that's another big no-no).



2. DO Be Respectful In General. Ok, this isn't really a cultural norm exclusive to Thailand, but it still needs to be said. As a nak muay (student of Muay Thai) you need to develop a humble, respectful attitude in all areas of your life. A lot of foreigners come to Thailand thinking they are above the Thai people for whatever reason, and this can lead to a lot of arguments and fights which can easily be avoided.

Understand that you are studying *their sport* in *their country* and the very least you can do is respect the people and culture. That being said, being respectful also requires you to be aware of the rest of cultural norms of the list!

3. DON'T Point With Your Feet. The Thai people consider the feet the filthiest part of the body, so pointing to things with your feet or stuffing money (which has an image of the King) in your shoes, is probably not the best idea.

In the context of a Muay Thai fight, if you see a Thai front kick another Thai in the face you will hear an uproar from the crowd since it's considered a sign of disrespect.

4. DON'T Touch a Thai's Head. The lowest part of the body, the feet, are considered the dirtiest, so naturally what do you think the highest part of the body is considered?

Touching a Thai on the head might not be the smartest thing to do since it's considered sacred to most Thais.

5. DO Keep Your Cool and Smile :) This is a good rule of thumb regardless of where you are in the world, but especially in Thailand where it is known as "*The Land of Smiles*". Smiling lets the Thai people know you are friendly and is actually proven to make YOU happier, so it's a win-win!

Also, "losing your face" in public by using a loud voice or profanity is considered very counterproductive in Thailand and is looked down upon by the Thai people. Avoid "losing face" and try to control your emotions... it will help you inside and outside the ring.

6. DO Take Off Your Shoes/Sandals - Almost anytime you enter an indoor area in Thailand it is customary to take off your footwear. If you notice a pile of shoes at the massage parlor, pharmacy, shop, and especially a Thai's person house, make sure you take yours off!

7. DO Learn The Wai - Instead of shaking hands, it is customary to "wai" or perform a short bow with your hands in a prayer position. To do a wai, press your palms together, and touch the tip of your fingers to your nose then take a short bow. In the case you are greeting elder, monk, teacher, parent, or the King, there is a different variation where your finger tips touch your forehead.

However, if a Thai greets you with a handshake, then you can go ahead and return it. Just DO NOT use your left hand due to the fact that the Thai people consider the left hand dirty since they use it as their toilet paper.

8. DO Dress Appropriately At Temples (Wats) - A high percentage of Thai people practice the Buddhist religion, so showing respect whenever you are a Buddhist Temple or ceremony is the right thing to do. Try to avoid sleeveless shirts, flip-flops, and short skirts/shorts. Also make sure to leave your shoes outside the temple as you enter.

9. DON'T Touch A Monk, Especially If You're A Woman - Yes it might be sexist, but it is the tradition and it should be respected. Monks are forbidden to have any type of physical contact with a woman and is strictly observed.

10. DON'T Show Public Affection - Hugging or kissing in public is considered rude in most areas of Thailand. If you happen to be in Patong or Pattaya (more sex-touristy areas) then it is probably not going to cause much of a stir, but just be aware of your surroundings and try to avoid groping your significant other too much while in public.

NOTE ON POLICE

You are in a foreign country with foreign laws, don't be an idiot. You should be extremely respectful towards police because they ultimately can ruin your time in Thailand. Do not curse, do not get angry, and do not act like you know the laws. The police can arrest you for almost any reason they want, so do not give them any reason!

- LEARNING THE THAI LANGUAGE -

Let's be real. If you are heading to a foreign country like Thailand you should probably learn at least *some* of their language. Not only will this make your experience easier since you will be able to have basic communications with taxis, vendors, trainers and police, but it will also show respect to the Thai people showing that you have taken the time to learn their language.

When you start speaking Thai to locals, they will see that you are trying to learn their language and help you with whatever it is you are trying to say or do. Most vendors will give you a deal if you try to bargain with them in Thai, which can save you a decent amount of money in the long run. Also, learning how to ask for directions, order your food, and have general conversations with your Thai trainers will make your experience more fun and less stressful.

The Thai language is a rather difficult language to pick up. You can use the same one word in a different tone and it could mean something completely different. For instance, "kao" can mean nine, knee, rice, come in, and news depending on whether you say it in a low, high, rising, or falling tone... it's tough!

Although the words and phrases below will give you a basic understanding of the Thai language, there are a few additional options you could take to become more fluent in speaking and understanding Thai:

1. Take Thai Language Classes - I took an eight week course that really helped me understand more than just the Thai vocabulary, but the grammar and pronunciation of the words too. It also helped because I was able to speak and have conversations with my teacher while she corrected me and explained why something was right or wrong. Knowing that I was signed up for a class made me more accountable to actually taking the time to learn Thai, where as if I were to do it by myself I probably would have made excuses to why I didn't have time to.

2. [Buy The Thai Rosetta Stone](#) - If there are not any Thai classes available by you, then this is probably the next best thing. The Rosetta Stone is one of the most popular pieces of language learning software there is, because it works! People who have used The Rosetta Stone speak very highly of it and also say how easy and fun it is to learn a new language using the program. For around \$300 (which is around the same cost as

taking a class) you will get a complete language learning system that will help you speak and understand Thai, and give you the confidence to use it when you make the trip to Thailand.

3. Study On Your Own - This is definitely the hardest option to do, but you should still be able to pick up enough basics to have simple conversations with the locals. In my Thai class we used a book called "[*Thai For Beginners*](#)" which covers all the basics you could want to learn about the Thai language. Another good read is "[*Fluent in 3 months*](#)" which will give you tips and tricks to pick up any language quickly. That being said, it is up to you to hold yourself accountable to take the time to study the vocabulary and learn the pronunciations.

4. Practice With Locals - Not only is this one of the best ways to learn Thai, but it is one of the most fun (and at times frustrating) ways to learn too. It would be a good idea to have some type of vocabulary before you head over, but even if you don't, you could still pick up a good amount by taking the time to speak and practice with your trainers and other locals.

If you do not have time to learn the Thai language, there are plenty of apps on your smart phone that you can use to help translate and speak for you if you needed. However, I promise you will have a much better time if you are able to speak and understand some of the basic Thai words and phrases. Study up!

- USEFUL THAI WORDS AND PHRASES -

Below are some common and useful Thai words and phrases that you should learn to get the most out of your experience in Thailand. Be sure to look over these words and study them consistently.

Hello = sà-wàtdii
How are you? = sà-baai dii mái
I am fine (man) = pom sà-baai dii krap
I am fine (woman) = chan sà-baai dii ka
Thank you = korp kun krap / ka
You're welcome = yin dii krap / ka
Nice to meet you = yindii tii dâi rûu jàk
What is your name? = koon cheu a-rái
Excuse me/Sorry = kor-tôot
Having fun? = sanuk mai?
It's a lot of fun = sanuk mak
I love you long time = pom/chan rak khun nan leu
You are very beautiful = khun sway mak
You are crazy = khun ba

What? = a-rái
Where? = tii-nai

SHOPPING

How much = táo-rài
How much is this? = níi áo-rài
How many? = gii
Which one? = an nai
Over here - tii-níi
Over there = tii-nân
This = níi
That = nán
This one = an níi
That one = an nán
I would like to have this = tong garn an níi krap/ka
Can you discount? = loht dai mai krap/ka
Cheap = tùuk
Expensive = peeng
Too much = pai
Difficult = yâak
Easy = ngâai
Very, many = mâak

ASKING FOR HELP/DIRECTIONS

Can you help me please? = chuay dai mai
I'm lost = pom/chan long tang
Can you speak English? = poot pa sa ang-grit dai mai
Can you speak louder? = poot dang dang dai mai
Could you speak slowly? = pôut cháa cháa dâai mái
Can you say that again? = pôut ìik-tii dâai mái
One more time = ìik-tii
Understand? = kâo-jai mái
I don't understand = mâi kâo-jai
Say again please? = poot eek krang
What does ... mean? = ... plae wa a-rai
Slow = cháa
Slowly = cháa cháa
Quick, fast = reo
Quickly = reo reo
A little - nítnòi
Which way? = dtrong nai
Left = sâai
Right = kwáa

Straight ahead = trong-bpai
Next to = yòo kâang lang
How far? glai tào-rài
Far = glai
Close = glâi

BOXING

Boxing = muay
Thai boxer = nak muay
Warrior = nak su
To box = som muay
To kick = dtae
Elbow = fan sok;
Punch = chok
Front kick = teep
Round kick = dtae wiang
To win = chanak;
To lose = peh
Good luck = chok di
Gloves: nuam
Hand wraps: pad meu
Mouth guard: fang yang
Boxing camp = kai muay
Teacher/Trainer = kru
Boxing Dance = ram muay

VERBS

To do/make = tam
To like = chôop
To drink = dùum
To eat = gin
To watch = duu
To speak = pûut
To read = àan
To write = kian
To study = rian
To listen = fang
To teach = sawn
To work = tam-ngaam
To sleep = nawn
To wake up = dtuun
To go = bpai
To come = maa

To play = lên
To drive = kàp
To ride = kii
To buy = súu
To sell = kaai
To run = wíng
To walk = daan

FOOD/EATING OUT

Food = aa-haan
Thai food = aa-haan tai
Restaurant = ráan aa-haan
Bathroom = hông-náam
Where is the bathroom? = hông-náam yùu tîi-nai
Snack = kà-nom
Dessert = kawngwaan
Water = náam
Ice = náamkeng
Orange juice = náamsôm
Tea = chaa
Coffee = gaa-fee
Beer = bia
Rice = kâao
Fried rice = khao phat
Noodles = bà-mìi
Spicy = phet
Cool = yen
Cold = nao
Pig/Pork = moo
Chicken = gai
Crab = pu
Vegetable = pak
Breakfast = aa-haan cháao
Lunch = aa-haan tîang
Dinner = aa-haan yen
What food do you like? = kun chôop aa-haan à-rai.
I like Thai food = pom/chan chôop aa-haan tai.
Check please = check bin/kep tang

COLORS

Color = sii
Black = sii dam
White = sii kaao

Red = sii deeng
Green = sii kiao
Blue = sii fáa
Brown = sii náam-dtaan
Yellow = sii luang
Pink = sii chompuu
Purple = sii mûang
Orange = sii sôm
Grey = sii tao

NUMBERS

1 = neung
2 = song
3 = saam
4 = sì
5 = hâa
6 = hòk
7 = jèt
8 = bpèet
9 = gâao
10 = sìp
11 = sìp et
12 = sìp song
13 = sìp sam
14 = sìp sì
15 = sìp ha
20 = yîi sìp
21 = yîi sìp et
22 = yîi sìp song
23 = yîi sìp saam
24 = yîi sìp sì
25 = yîi sìp hâa
30 = saam sìp
40 = si sìp
50 = hâa sìp
60 = hòk sìp
70 = jèt sìp
80 = bpèet sìp
90 = gâao sìp
100 = neung roi
150 = neung roi ha sìp
500 = hâa roi
1000 = neung pan
1500 = neung pan hâa roi

2000 = si pan
5000 = hâa pan

TELLING TIME IN THAI

What time is it? = wee-laa tâo-rái
Time = wee-laa
Hour = chúa
Minute = naa-tii
Second = wii-naa-tii
Five more minutes = ìik- háa naa-tii
Today = wan ni
Tonight = keun ni
Tomorrow = prung ni
2 am = dtii song
3 am = dtii sam
4 am = dtii sì
5 am = dtii hâa
6 am = hòk moong cháao
7 am = bpèet moong cháao
8 am = jèt moong cháao
9 am = gâao moong cháao
10 am = sìp moong cháao
11 am = sìp et moong
mid day = tiang

1 pm = bàai neung
2 pm = bàai song
3 pm = bàai sam
4 pm = sì moong yen
5 pm = haa moong yen
6 pm = hok moong yen
7 pm = neung tûm
8 pm = song tûm
9 pm = sam tûm
10 pm = sì tûm
11 pm = haa tûm
midnight = tiang kheun

- THAI WOMEN -

Your main focus when you travel to Thailand is usually related to Muay Thai in one way or another, right? Well, that focus can shift rather quickly once you get approached by a beautiful Thai woman who knows what to say (or do) to get your attention.

Unlike back in your home country where the guys are usually the ones pursuing the girls, it is the exact opposite in Thailand. Almost everywhere you go in Thailand (if you're a guy), you will most likely have Thai women hitting on you. It is a bit of a shock at first, but it can be quite a confidence booster having gorgeous women hitting on you around the clock.

If you are a single guy, then you will definitely have fun in Thailand knowing that women are admiring you and trying to get your attention. With that being said, there are different types of Thai women out there and some of them will be quick to take advantage of you if you give them the chance. Here are the three different types of women you will most likely run into:



HOOKERS

In Patong, Pattaya, and other sex-tourism cities, there will be plenty of hookers and prostitutes forcing themselves on you. If you're into that kind of stuff, then you will have a great time. If you are not, be stern when you say no and do not fall into any of their traps.

These ladies are good at playing the game and will go above and beyond when it comes to trying to get you as their client. If a beautiful Thai lady starts hitting on you, kissing you, dancing with you, and grabbing you, do not just assume it is because you are so dashing and handsome. Most of the time (probably around 99% of the time) if a girl shows that much interest in you, it's because she sees you as a prime client ready to pay up for some pleasure.

Also, be careful of falling into the trap of feeling bad for a girl with a sad story. It could be a legitimate heartbreaking story, or it could be completely fantasized and untrue. Regardless of whether or not their life stories are true, don't get caught up feeling like you can save them. Chances are she already has plenty of other "boyfriends" in her back pocket who send her donations when she is in "distress." Keep your cards close to your chest and do not shell out any money for the sake of feeling bad, otherwise it can lead into a downward spiral.

KATOEY (LADYBOYS)

The infamous ladyboys roam the streets late at night looking to take home their latest victim. Be on your toes if you are stumbling home after a night of drinking, because that is when the ladyboys pick their prey and go in for the kill. Having a somewhat sober friend help you decide whether or not you are about to go home with a ladyboy is crucial in keeping your dignity.

Some ladyboys are easy to spot while others can be surprisingly hot and do a good job at convincing you they are a woman. To figure out if the woman you are talking to is a ladyboy, look for the obvious signs; big hands, rough skin, Adam's apple, and other manly features. Another tip a friend gave me was to do the "tickle test". This consists of tickling your potential ladyboy when they least expect it to see if they let down their guard and allow their true, deep laugh comes out.

To see how good you are at spotting ladyboys, [take this test and see how you do.](#)

THE "NORMAL" ONES

The hookers and ladyboys can make it feel like there is no hope finding a decent Thai girl, but fortunately there are plenty of normal, gorgeous Thai women out there who like the idea of dating a farang. Be careful though, I am not sure if I have ever actually met a woman, Thai or Western, who is "normal" by any sense of the word (just kidding ladies, I love you all). But in all seriousness, getting in a relationship when your focus is supposed to be on Muay Thai can deter you from reaching your goals and give you less energy and focus when it comes to training.

Now, I am not saying you shouldn't have fun or enjoy the fact that you are single, I am just saying be wary of your choices and make sure you do not look for a relationship in

the wrong places (like a bar or massage parlor). If you do happen to land a chance with a bombshell Thai girl, [make sure you follow these tips when it comes time to date.](#)

- DENTIST, DOCTORS, AND PHARMACIES -

When it comes to healthcare in Thailand, a lot of foreigners tend to be sketched out because it is not as developed as a country as their home country. Chances are you will actually be surprised by the quality care and services that most dentists, doctors and pharmacies supply. That being said, before deciding to do either of these options, here is a little more detail and information about dentists, doctors, and pharmacies:

DENTISTS

There are hole-in-the-wall dental clinics everywhere you go in Thailand... I would try to avoid these if possible. You are much better off going to an official clinic or hospital since they are more trustworthy and more likely to do a good job. Almost all dentist offices offer the full spectrum of services including cleanings, fillings, scalings, root canals, surgeries, and everything you can imagine. The medical standards, cleanliness, and customer service is just as good, if not better than most western Dentist offices and will cost a fraction of the price. Typically a cleaning in Thailand (depending where you are) can range from as little as 500 baht to as much as 1500 baht. You can also show off your glistening white smile after a whitening session that costs around 9000 baht.

DOCTORS

If you end up having to visit a doctor or hospital in Thailand, the services tend to be easily accessible, inexpensive, and of high quality. The best hospitals are in the Bangkok area and have English speaking staff with most nurses and doctors being trained by best medical schools from all over the world. Other places like Chiang Mai, Koh Samui, Phuket, and Pattaya have large international hospitals that specifically market and cater to foreigners as well.

When it comes to costs, you can expect to pay around \$20 for a basic office visit that includes special tests, medications, or procedures. If you happen to visit the emergency room, costs are still relatively cheap and stay under the \$100 range without including in any additional costs. Either way, you should still have travel health insurance which will help cover these costs and other health expenses that arise.

PHARMACIES

Thailand pharmacies dispense a wide variety of drugs, antibiotics, and medications that are often only accessible by prescription back in the US. Although you can get your fair share of medications at your local pharmacy, they do not sell opiate pain killers or mood altering drugs. If you need a refill of your prescription while in Thailand, you should have a doctor's note as well as the generic name for the drug. In some cases your best option may be to visit a hospital and be seen by a doctor to get your prescription refilled.

- COMMON ILLNESSES, SCAMS AND DANGERS -

It is not that danger lurks at every corner, or scam artists are out to get you, or getting ill happens to everyone in Thailand, but being aware of the dangers, scams, and illnesses that can occur is a smart idea. Needless to say, getting injured or being sick in a foreign land sucks, especially if you don't know what how to make the situation better. Before I go into the specifics of what dangers and illnesses you should avoid, follow these tips as a precaution:

PRECAUTIONARY TIPS

- Research your destination and know what to expect.
- Make copies of your passport, itinerary, and any other important documents. Have a folder specifically for this type of stuff and make sure you know where it is.
- Carry contact information on you at all times.
- Do not flaunt expensive clothing or jewelry unless you want to put a target on your back for pick-pockets and scam artists.
- Always keep your hotel doors locked.
- Purchase travel health insurance and do not take any chances!

EATING TIPS

- Do not eat food served at room temperature. Especially bacon. I have had some bad experience with bacon from a breakfast buffet. Although it is tempting because of how delicious it is, do not do it!
- Do not drink tap water! Do not use ice made from tap water either, you will regret it. Also keep this in mind when you are brushing your teeth or showering... don't drink the water!
- Eat at busy restaurants/street vendors. If all these other people are eating it and not getting sick from it, chances are you won't either. It is the restaurants where you don't see people eating that you should avoid.

CLEANLINESS TIPS

- Wash your hands often, especially before eating.
- Carry around hand sanitizer if possible.
- If you are going to have sex, whether it is with a hooker or a foreigner, use a condom.
- Avoid contact with sick people. Pretty obvious, but don't risk it. Also if you are sick, stay in your room and try your best to avoid getting other people sick!
- Avoid touching or feeding stray animals.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY TIPS

- Avoid motorbikes. Although most foreigners won't, it would be a much safer idea to avoid motorbikes at all cost. If you do rent or hire a motorbike taxi, wear a helmet.
- Be aware of the vehicle and driver you hire to drive you around. Make sure both the vehicle and driver is in good shape before committing to a ride.
- Wear your seatbelt in a car.
- Traffic laws are basically non-existent in Thailand, so whether you are driving or walking down the street, be aware of your surroundings.

OUTDOOR SAFETY TIPS

- Be prepared for the heat. Eat and drink regularly and have a bottle of water with you. If you start to feel dizzy or light headed, find some shade and drink some water. When you get home take a cold shower and lay in the A/C or with the fan on you. If it doesn't get any better, go to the hospital.
- Use sunscreen.
- Be prepared for random downpours of rain. Buy a cheap rain poncho and make sure to dry off whenever you get a chance. Staying wet for long periods of time will get you sick.
- Swim in only designated areas and be careful of rip tide.
- Be careful of coral and other things that can cut you up while you're swimming.
- Buy bug spray to keep mosquitos away.

- COMMON ILLNESSES AND DISEASES -

INFLUENZA

Flu is everywhere you go and it is no different in Thailand. Be aware of the symptoms which consist of high fever, muscle aches, runny nose, cough, and sore throat. If you think you are sick with the flu, the best treatment is rest and paracetamol.

LEPTOSPIROSIS

If you just finished river rafting or canyoning and feel like you have a headache and fever, you could very well have leptospirosis. It can vary from a very mild ailment to a fatal disease. It's easily treated with Doxycycline.

STDs

Do not be an idiot waving your dick around like you own the place. Be smart and wear a condom. Also, be cautious of what tattoo shop you go to and make sure their standards for cleanliness are high quality.

TRAVELER'S DIARRHEA (OR "THAI TUMMY")

I hate this shit. I've gotten it plenty of times and so has my girlfriend, Liz. It affects between 30% and 50% of travelers within two weeks of starting their trip and it could very easily happen multiple times. In over 80% of cases, traveler's diarrhea is caused by a bacteria that could be contracted from eating uncooked meat, unwashed vegetables, touching something, and a ton of other things. You will be having constant watery bowel movements, muscle aches, cramps, fever, nausea, and basically just feel like complete crap.

To treat "Thai Tummy" it's important to stay as hydrated even though most of your fluids will be constantly come out of both ends of your body (warmer water filled with electrolytes seemed to work well for me). Also, taking antibiotics such as Norfloxacin, Ciprofloxacin or Azithromycin will kill the bacteria quickly.

GIARDIASIS

This is a fairly common parasite found in travelers. Symptoms include nausea, bloating, excess gas, fatigue, and intermittent diarrhea. Awful smelling burps are also known to happen due to giardiasis. Although the parasite will eventually go away in a few months if left untreated, the best option is to take Tinidazole or Metronidazole.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Training hard and often in the heat can very easily lead to heat exhaustion. Like I mentioned earlier, if you feel light-headed, dizzy and completely fatigued, take a break by finding some shade and drinking some cold water. Take an ice cold shower and lay in bed with a cold washcloth on your head. If you do not feel much better after this, consider going to the hospital.

- COMMON SCAMS -

Not to scare you, but con-artists are everywhere. Okay, maybe not everywhere but you should still be prepared to deal with a few during your stay in Thailand. If you are spending time in touristy areas you need to be extra careful since you will most likely be targeted for a scam at some point. In order to have the best time possible and avoid any type of scam, there are a few guidelines you should follow.

GENERAL TIPS TO AVOID SCAMS

Too good to be true? It is. Use your common sense. If something is too good to be true, 99% of the time it is.

Be stern and confident. Especially in touristy areas where friendly salespeople and vendors will come up to you and strike a conversation. Either ignore them or be stern with them by just saying 'NO'.

Do your research. You can never be too careful when it comes to doing background checks on your gym, hotel, or the general area you are staying. Know what to expect and know which companies to trust and which companies to avoid.

- SCAMS TO AVOID -

DOUBLE PRICING

Thais are going to pay less than a foreigner, just get used to it. Although this is not necessarily a scam, it is still something to be aware of since you will probably run into a scenario where a Thai local pays half the price you paid for a piece of clothing or entry to an attraction. For Muay Thai fights, you will have to pay full price where most Thai's will get in for dirt cheap or even free!

MOTORBIKE SCAMS

Motorbikes are risky business to ride in the first place because of how dangerous the roads are in Thailand, but knowing that you could be easily scammed out of your money might make you think twice before renting one. I'm not trying to scare you; I am just trying to make you aware that renting a motorbike comes with a huge risk for your health and wallet.

Before deciding to rent a motorbike, make sure to do your research. Google search reviews, ask gym members, and talk to the gym owner about a rental bike company before handing over your passport and money. Doing a background check and asking

around prior to renting a motorbike will save you a ton of hassle in the future.

When you do go to rent a motorbike, almost all motorbike companies will ask you for your passport and to sign a contract agreeing to their terms. If I were you, I would make a photocopy of my passport and try *not* hand my passport over. I do know plenty of people who have handed in their passports and had no issues getting it back, but I would avoid doing so if possible. Most people don't think twice about this even though it could easily change the vibe of your stay in Thailand in a heartbeat. One of the most common scams is when a motorbike company will send you off with an already damaged motorbike that will inevitably breakdown during one of your daily rides. When it does, they will make you pay an insane amount of cash to repair it or hold your passport until you do.



Another way to get scammed is when the rental shop claims you damaged or scratched their bike, even though it is as good as new. They will threaten to keep your passport and usually the police will get involved, who are usually in it, too. If this were to happen, you are best off paying for the “damage” and avoiding any type of confrontation.

However, to avoid this happening all together, the first thing you should do is to make sure you are renting from a trusted dealer. Secondly, take multiple pictures of different angles of the motorbike, preferably with the renter in them so they can't blame you for imaginary damages.

Oh wait, there's more! There is also a chance that your motorbike could be “stolen” by someone who works for the motorbike company and happens to have another pair of keys. Since you have handed over your passport and signed a contract stating you would pay if your bike was stolen, you will be forced to pay to replace it.

To avoid this scam you should carry your own lock and key and an old passport to avoid getting sucked into this annoying scam.

JETSKI SCAMS

You know everything I told you about the motorbike scam? Well the same scam is also popular when it comes to jet skis!

BILL PADDING

This can happen everywhere but is known to happen a lot to tourists in Thailand. Double check your bill and change before leaving any type of transaction, whether it is at a restaurant, bar, or even your local 7/11.

THE GEM SCAM

Let me just put it this way - if something is too good to be true, it probably is. There will be stores where vendors will offer you “priceless” gems that are plentiful in Thailand but scarce everywhere else around the world. They will do a good job at selling it, too. Don’t be gullible and use your common sense. There are plenty of legitimate stores and traders where you should do your jewelry shopping, anyway.

AIRPORT TAXIS

When you arrive in Thailand and leave the airport doors, you will be bombarded by taxi drivers offering to drive you to your location. Most of these taxis will be more than happy to overcharge you if they get the chance and be really pushy while trying to get you in their car. Be picky, be confident, and be aware of how much it should cost you to get to your hotel or gym by doing some research prior to arriving. Always make sure to set a price in advance regardless of where you are in Thailand. And if you get a metered taxi, make sure they put the meter on!!!

“THIS IS CLOSED”

Taxi drivers might try to convince you that a hotel or tourist attraction is closed even though it’s not. They will then try to convince you to go to this other place where they will try to rip you off your money by selling you counterfeit products or gems.

TIMESHARES

Timeshares are a scam anywhere you go. You might just happen to bump into a friendly local who just happens to have a scratch off ticket and you just happen to win. Whoa, crazy right?! Wrong. Next thing you know you are signed up for a timeshare meeting where they hard sell you every step of the way trying to convince you to buy a

timeshare for an amazing deal. Avoid wasting your time and money. Like I said before, if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

SEX SHOWS

In the entertainment areas where the nightlife is prominent, be aware of ping pong shows and other sex shows that promise you cheap - or even free - entertainment. Believe it or not, it is not free! They will charge you ridiculous amounts for drinks and do whatever they can to have you empty your wallet.

GAMBLING

You might be invited to a game of cards or to roll some dice by a super friendly guy who sees that you are hanging out by yourself. Do not gamble. You will get fu@*ed. Plain and simple.

HOMELESS BEGGARS

Some might actually be homeless and need the money, but some put on a show to get charity from tourists who feel bad for them. Use your best judgment.

PICK-POCKETS

This is something that goes on all around the world, but it is known to happen in Thailand especially in the touristy locations. Be aware of where you put your money and try your best to keep it in a safe place. If a small child approaches you to sell cigarettes, candy, or anything else, watch these kids closely as they are seasoned pros at stealing money from unaware tourists.

- COMMON DANGERS -

Generally speaking, Thailand is a pretty safe place. When I am in Thailand and people ask me where I am from and I say New York, they act like I live in the Wildwest where there is rape, drugs, and murder going on everyday... which there probably is now that I think about it.

My point is that Thailand is most likely no more dangerous than wherever it is you come from. As long as you are not being a disrespectful dumbass or trying to do something illegal, you should have no worries going to Thailand. The main danger is not

being aware of the potential dangers since it is a foreign country. So pay attention to these possible dangers:

TRAFFIC/MOTORBIKES

You know the stereotype about Asians being crazy drivers? Well, being in Thailand will make you believe that stereotype because they drive like maniacs!

There are basically no road rules. You will see motorbikes with 10 people stacked on top of each other, pickup trucks filled with what seems like 100 people, and tuk-tuks weaving in and out of traffic like it's a normal thing to do... which it is. Because of this style of driving, be very careful whenever you are on the roads in Thailand.



Not to mention that motorbike accidents are one of the leading causes of death in Thailand, partially due to the reckless driving, partially due to lack of experience the driver has riding a motorbike. That being said, if you have not driven a motorcycle or motorbike before, you should think twice before renting one.

LADYBOYS/HOOKERS

Yes, these “ladies” make the list for a number of reasons. Ladyboys make the list as a danger because they will put you in danger of making a complete fool out of yourself and regretting the decisions you made that night you ended up too drunk. The hookers are a danger to your wallet since they will most likely try to suck you dry of your money.

POLITICAL UNREST

For a rather peaceful country, there has been a steady stream of political protest and violence going on in the capital of Bangkok. There are two groups, the red shirts and the yellow shirts, that have been going back in forth arguing over certain political issues.

The issues shouldn't matter to you. What should matter to you is staying away from these protests and not picking sides... unless you like to live dangerously.

TSUNAMIS

Thailand has been hit with some brutal tsunami's in its recent past and chances are it will be hit by a few more in the near future. Stay up to date with the weather and be aware of where higher grounds are, especially if you are in the southern islands.

AIR POLLUTION/SMOG

The air pollution in northern Thailand gets worse and worse every year. During the months of February, March and April, chances are very high that smog will take over the skies and air pollution will be at dangerous levels. If possible try to avoid places like Chiang Mai around this time of year.

DRUGS

If you are thinking of trying to do any type of illegal drug in Thailand, think again. First off, if you have followed my blog you would know that [I am an avid weed smoker](#). However, I have not smoked once since I've been in Thailand, and that is because all drugs are very illegal and getting caught with even a spliff can get you jail time in a Thai prison. You are not in Thailand to get arrested or waste your time and money doing drugs, you are smarter than that.

NIGHTLIFE

This generally goes for the nightlife anywhere, but especially in Thailand where you are a foreigner. Alcohol makes fools out of the most responsible people, so try your best to be aware of how much you are drinking otherwise you might find yourself in a less than ideal situation. It is also a smart idea keep your drink on you at all times so you avoid getting it drugged while you leave it unattended.

There are Thai's who keep an eye out for drunk foreigners to take advantage of them whether it be stealing their money or getting them to start a fight. Keep your senses when you are out and try not to get absolutely wasted.

HOOPS OF FIRE

Yes, you read that right, *hoops of fire*. During parties down in the southern islands, you are likely to run into a flaming ring of fire that tourists love to try their shot of jumping

through. Most tourists are wasted while doing this, so they will often try to make the jump and end up getting first degree burns. Don't be that guy.

RIP CURRENT

Be careful of where you swim and do not swim drunk. The rip currents can pull you into the ocean and make it very difficult to get back to shore. Try to swim in places where you see other people swimming because that generally means it is safe.

- EATING IN THAILAND -



Do you *love* food like I do? Well you should, because food is awesome. If somehow you don't love food, the wide variety of delicious food in Thailand will quickly change your mind!

When it comes to picking what to eat, you could very easily get overwhelmed with the choices of Thai restaurants, street meat, western cafe's, fruit vendors, and food markets. Fortunately, this is a good problem to have!

In this chapter, you will learn the ins and outs of what it is like to eat in Thailand. We will dive into a range of topics from eating the typical Thai meals, splurging on western dishes, cooking your own meals, and eating on a budget. I guarantee by the end of this chapter you will be salivating at the mouth and chomping at the bit to eat some Thai food!

- MY THOUGHTS ON TIPPING -

Before I go into detail about the situations you will find yourself in while eating in Thailand, I wanted to give you my two cents on tipping.

Is it customary to tip in Thailand? No.
Does that mean you should never tip? No.

I am a firm believer in karma - and I am a former waiter - so my beliefs on this subject might vary from yours. However, I think it is the right, nice thing to do to tip someone when they rightfully deserve a tip. Since it is not customary in Thailand, almost any amount of tip is a sign of gratitude and will be appreciated by your server.

On the other side of things, if your server is rude, unfriendly and messes up your order, then whether or not you leave a tip is up to you.

I guess the main thing I'm trying to get across is this - Thai people work tirelessly around the clock and do not make a lot of money. Just because it is not "customary" to tip does not mean you should neglect tipping whenever you get a chance. Show some appreciation by leaving them a little something if you get good service. Rant over.

- EATING AT A THAI RESTAURANT -

Thais love their rice, noodles, soups, curries, meat sticks, and spicy foods. If you are a fan of these types of foods, then you will thoroughly enjoy yourself and spend very little money in the process. Finding a Thai restaurant is a pretty easy thing to do since they are almost everywhere you go. Although you can walk into basically any Thai restaurant and expect to pay as little as 30 baht for a meal, you will want to make sure you choose the *right* restaurant before doing so.

Since there is a surplus of Thai restaurants to choose from, you will run into a fair share of bad restaurants that do not necessarily follow the health code. To figure out which restaurants are good and clean, just follow the locals and see where they eat! If

you see a restaurant full of Thai's (and/or foreigners) chances are that is a place you want to eat. If a place has no one eating there during busy dining hours, think twice before sitting down and ordering some pad thai.

ORDERING FOOD

When it comes to ordering food, it can be rather difficult getting across what you want, especially if the server doesn't speak English and your Thai accent is horrible. There are a few ways to overcome this problem:

Point at a picture - A menu that has pictures is a foreigner's best friend. If you see something you like, just point to it and try to say it in Thai if you can.

Download a translator app on your phone - There are some amazing apps that will listen to your voice and come up with the direct translation on the spot. You can also download a English-Thai dictionary to help you out when you're in a pickle.

Learn basic Thai words and phrases - [The language section](#) in the previous chapter will supply you with all the basic words you will need to know when eating out at a Thai restaurant. If you learn to say and understand these words, it will make your life a whole lot easier.

Another thing to know when eating out at a Thai restaurant (or any restaurant in Thailand for the matter) is that the service will probably not be the best you've come across. Here are a few things that should not surprise you if they happen:

- Your waiter leaves for long periods of times, and most of the time it is when you need something badly.
- Your friend might order a well-done steak and you will order a Caesar salad. Somehow your friend's steak is served before your salad, which you have to wait another 10 minutes for.
- You order a meal and then see the chef hop on a motorbike to drive and get the ingredients that they don't have.
- You point at a picture on the menu and try to say it in your horrible Thai accent. When the food comes, it's a completely different order than what you thought you pointed at. The worst thing is that you can't even complain because chances are they won't understand what you are saying and it would do more harm than good.
- You will say you don't want spicy, and they will assume that means you want it as spicy as humanly possible.

Those are just *some* of the unique situations you might find yourself in when you eat out in Thailand. Although the service can sometimes be frustrating, you have to keep in mind that they are not working for tip so they have no immediate urgency to cater to your needs.

One last thing, learn to be comfortable with speaking up when you need your check because otherwise it might not ever come!

GENERAL COSTS WHEN EATING AT A THAI RESTAURANT

The good thing about eating like a Thai all the time is that the food is cheap! Most meals in most locations (with a few exceptions) will range from 30 - 150 baht. Fried rice meals, pad thai, curries, and soups will cost an average of 60 baht and do a decent job at filling you up. Not to mention you can order additional rice, eggs, noodles, and other various sides for very little as well.

Along with dirt cheap pricing, the food quality is normally very good! Obviously the quality of food will depend on where you go out to eat, but generally speaking you will get a tasty meal at most places. But like I mentioned earlier, try to find the spots where locals eat and your stomach will be happy you did.

When it comes to drinks you can usually bring your own water or order a water for around 10 or 20 baht. If you want to be a baller and really do it up, then fruit shakes, coffees, teas, and alcohol are a good option and still cost only around 50 baht.

- EATING AT A WESTERN RESTAURANT -

Most areas in Thailand there are a variety of western restaurants to choose from as well. Italian pizzerias, steak houses, Irish pubs, and burger bistros are just some of the western places you'll run into. There are also fast food chains like KFC, Dunkin' Donuts, McDonalds, and others if you want to go that route (although I would highly suggest not to).

Just because it is a western restaurant does not mean you will necessarily be dealing with a European server. It is actually more likely that you will have a Thai server who speaks decent English. With that being said, you should still use the tips mentioned above in the "Eating At A Thai Restaurant" section when it comes to ordering food, otherwise you run the risk of getting something you didn't mean to order.

EATING A WESTERN BREAKFAST

If you are like me, you are not going to want to have rice, noodles, or curry for breakfast. I have done it before for a couple weeks and it was not too pleasurable of an experience.

Most areas in Thailand will have western breakfast joints where you can have eggs, bacon, toast, potatoes and other "normal" breakfast items that you are used to. However, compared to Thai dishes, these meals will be rather expensive. You can

expect to pay anywhere from 150 - 300 baht for complete meals with coffee or tea. Although this doesn't seem too bad upfront, it can quickly add up if you do it every single day.

There are also all you can eat buffets that run between 200 - 400 baht and vary greatly on the quality and type of food. I have had bad experiences with some uncooked bacon and other foods at a number of breakfast buffets, so I have stayed away from them since then. That being said, there are some bangin' breakfast buffets to be found.

My advice would be to try to find a cheap breakfast joint if possible. If that is not in the cards for you, consider buying a tea kettle or hot plate to make your own breakfast. I cook my own breakfast and switch between eating muesli, oatmeal, bacon, fruits, and eggs (fried, scrambled, and hardboiled) for breakfast. Cooking breakfast has saved me a good chunk of change that I would normally be spending on buffets that serve the same exact things!

GENERAL COSTS AT A WESTERN RESTAURANT

The costs vary greatly depending on the restaurant. If you are going to a local pizzeria, it is probably going to be cheaper than the upscale steakhouse down the road. Regardless of what type of western restaurant you choose, the prices of food will most likely be more expensive than any Thai restaurant. So, if you are on a tight budget, you might want to think twice before dropping your savings on steak and fries.

To give you a general idea though, here are some average prices of some of the most common western meals you'll run into:

Pizza = 150 - 300 baht (depending on the toppings)
Steak Dinner = 400 baht +
Spaghetti and Meatballs = 150 - 200 baht
Hamburger with fries = 80 - 150 baht
Eggs, bacon and toast = 150 baht
Caesar Salad = 150 baht

As you can see, all of these dishes cost more than a Thai meal. Although it might be ok to splurge every now and again on a juicy steak dinner, you might want to double check your budget and savings account before doing so.

- EATING STREET VENDOR FOOD -

The cheapest food you will find will most likely be from the street vendor right outside your bungalow. Street vendors sell chicken, fish, prawns, vegetables, fruits, snacks, noodles, rice, soup, and basically everything else under the sun.

Ordering from a street vendor follows the same rules as ordering from any other place in Thailand so make sure you know how to say the foods, have a translator app on your phone, or point at what you want with confidence. In most areas the street vendors are used to farang ordering food from them, so you shouldn't have too many problems.



The best is when you come across a food market where they serve everything you could possibly want. Whenever I find a nightly market, it's usually my go-to place for dinner regardless of what restaurants are around just because the variety and cost can't be beat. If you are in an area that has a badass food market around, make sure to use it to its full potential!

When it comes to the cost of street vendor food, it will depend on the food and the area you are in. However, you should expect to pay about the same, if not less than most of the Thai restaurants in the same area. If you are a poor person who happens to be hungry all the time, then street vendors and food markets are the way to go!

- MAKING YOUR OWN MEALS -

The last option you have when it comes to eating in Thailand is preparing your own meals and snacks. This is a great idea especially if you plan on staying for an extended period of time because of how cheap and convenient it is.

Spending money upfront on the necessary appliances (if not already supplied by the place you are living) such as a blender, tea kettle, hot plate, utensils, plates, bowls, etc. will end up paying off in the long run by saving money you would normally be spending on expensive breakfast buffets.

When it comes to shopping for food you can either check out local food markets or supermarkets like Big C or Tesco Lotus. If you go to local markets you will find the best deals on meat, fruits, and vegetables, but might have trouble finding more specific foods

like yogurt, honey, or oatmeal. If you shop at a Big C or Tesco Lotus, you can find basically everything you need to satisfy your taste buds, and for a decent price too.

Also, when I say “cook your own meals” I don’t mean anything extravagant or difficult. In my opinion, the fewer steps it takes to make something, the better. Some of my go-to snacks are hard-boiled eggs, watermelon shakes, muesli, and salads - all of which are ridiculously easy to whip up in the matter of minutes!

Having snack foods and quick meals to munch on will help you save time and money. Not only that, but it will also benefit your nutrition and training since you will be able to consistently feed yourself enough calories to make it through two training sessions a day!

- CHAPTER 5: TRAINING -



You are traveling to Thailand to train hard, improve your technique, get in phenomenal shape, and possibly even step into the ring, right? Well, if you want to get the most out of your time and training in Thailand, you should have a general grasp for what to expect during your stay.

This following chapter will outline everything you need to know about training in Thailand and cover important topics like training in heat, avoiding distractions, dealing with injuries, overtraining, strength training, yoga, nutrition, and more. Get ready to take some notes!

- A TYPICAL DAY OF TRAINING -

Most training camps in Thailand run basically the same type of workout each and every session. Although there are some minor differences, depending on the camp you go to, you can expect your normal training session to look something like this:

RUN

Most gyms (especially if your gym of choice produces a lot of fighters) will have you run 2 - 5 or more kilometers a day. The pace isn't anything crazy fast, it is usually pretty slow actually. Regardless of the speed, running is an important part for anyone training Muay Thai.

SKIP ROPE

After, or in substitution for the run, most gyms will have you skip rope for 5 - 15 minutes to loosen up.

STRETCH

When the body is loose and the blood is flowing, they will have you stretch out to prepare for your training session. Although I am not a fan of static stretching before a workout (because it has been proven to actually hinder your performance) it seems to be a constant thing at most camps. Doing dynamic movements like swinging your legs, torso, or arms might be a better alternative, but see how you feel with whatever they have you do first.

SHADOWBOX

Whether you are a complete beginner or experienced pro, taking the time to make minor adjustments and focus on your technique during shadowboxing will help you improve by leaps and bounds. Not to mention it is also a great time to do visualization if you have a fight coming up. [Don't skip shadowboxing if you know what's good for you.](#)

PAD WORK

Usually around this time one of the trainers will come over to you to get you started with some pad work. The first session or two will be a feeling out process for the both of you, so don't feel like you have to demolish the pads during your first day. Your trainer will usually hold 3 rounds of pads with you (more or less depending on your fitness level and the amount of other people at the gym) and during those rounds he will work on a variety of things with you depending on what he sees in your technique.

HEAVY BAG WORK

This could be before or after your pad session ,depending upon the trainer-to-student ratio. Regardless whether it is before or after, usually you will have some type of guidance with the heavy bag work unless all the trainers are busy with other students. If you are not sure how to use the heavy bag, [click here to for some workouts and mistakes to avoid.](#) Also do not be afraid to ask for help from the trainer or other students nearby.

CLINCHING/SPARRING

Depending on the day, and the gym, you will usually end up clinching or doing some technique sparring towards the end of your session. If you are a beginner, you will most likely work with other beginners or the trainers ([check out these sparring tips if it's your first time](#)). If you are more advanced, you will be matched up with equally skilled students and also get a chance to move around with the trainers.

ABS

Having a solid core is important, not only for taking shots to the body, but also for developing torque when you punch, kick, elbow, or knee. If abs aren't led by the trainers, you should be doing them anyway! [Click here for some solid ab routines to try](#).

STRETCH

The end of the workout is the ideal time to be doing static stretching. Stretches like touching your toes, butterfly stretch, runners stretch, and various yoga poses are a great way to open up your muscles and give them room to recover.

- THINGS TO CONSIDER -

OTHER FORMS OF CARDIO

Running and skipping rope are the traditional methods of warming up before a Muay Thai session, but they aren't the only ways. Biking, swimming, shadowboxing, and rowing are great alternatives that warm up your entire body and are much easier on your joints. That being said, some training camps will insist that you run. Running and putting in hours of roadwork is an old school way of thinking, but like many Muay Thai trainers will say "no run, no Muay Thai." If your gym and trainers are more open-minded with other forms of cardio then you might be able to avoid running, but if you are at a traditional gym where they have their fighters run every day, do not expect to miss out on any roadwork sessions.

Speaking of roadwork, there has been a great debate going on between running long distance and sprinting short burst intervals. If you want to know more about the benefits of both and how they should both be a part of your training routine, [click here for a detailed explanation of the benefits of both](#).

FOAM ROLLING

Like I mentioned earlier, static stretching before a workout is actually impairing your strength and speed. There have been studies done by the University of Zagreb that

show that static stretching before a workout reduces muscle strength by 5.5%. Instead of stretching, I use a foam roller before *and* after a workout.

If your gym has a foam roller, you should consider using it before your sessions to warm up and after to cool down. You can read more about why foam rolling is badass by [checking out this article here](#).



GROUP WARMUPS

What you will find at most gyms is that everyone does the warm up together. This is a great way to build the team atmosphere and for everyone to be on the same page when it comes to what to expect out of the days training session.

For sessions that are not in group settings and you find yourself doing your own independent warm-up, feel free to experiment with different ways to loosen up your body and get it prepared for training. Having a solid warm up routine where you go through a set sequence of movements will not only be good for training, but it will also give you a warmup formula to use when/if you decide to step into the ring.

- IMPLEMENTING OTHER FORMS OF TRAINING -

Although a majority of your time working out should consist of Muay Thai-related training, it is a good idea to mix it up every now and then to keep things from getting stagnant and boring. I know a lot of people (including myself) who can get bored doing the same type of training day in and day out, and if you are bored when you are training, you are probably not getting the full benefit from your sessions.

And it's not like it means you love Muay Thai any less, all it means is that you are human and you need some kind of variety to your day. Personally speaking, if I don't mix in riding a bike, doing yoga, going for a hike, or lifting weights, I get burnt out from the repetitive tasks that are involved with Muay Thai.

Some people might love training Muay Thai all day, everyday (and more power to you if you do) but if you need variety like I do, check out some of these other forms of training that will help you with your Muay Thai in other ways:

YOGA

I know most guys tend to stay away from yoga even though there are so many reasons you should be doing it. Besides the obvious benefit of improved flexibility, you will also improve your balance, coordination, awareness, breathing, dexterity, and strength. Not only that, but chances are (if you're a guy) you will be the only male in class surrounded by beautiful women looking to get in shape. See, it can't be *that* bad to try!



WEIGHT LIFTING

Doing a weight lifting routine can be a good-or-bad thing. If you focus your weight training on aesthetics and not on functional strength, you won't be benefitting your fight game at all. Make sure when you lift weights you are lifting with a purpose. [Click here to check out some great strength and conditioning workouts on Muay Thai Guy.](#)

Another great resource you should check out for strength and conditioning is 8weeksout.com.

CARDIO

There are a ton of other forms of cardio other than running that you can mix into your routine. I know that running is an important part to most training camps, especially in

Thailand, but switching it up every now and then is a good way to improve your endurance while keeping things from getting too mundane. Biking, rowing, hiking, and swimming are just some of the other forms of cardio you can mix in.

MMA/BJJ

Training in other martial arts will also benefit your Muay Thai training in one way or another. Although it might be a completely different discipline, it will force you to deal with new positions that require a lot of attention and focus. Not only that, but you will also be improving your cardio, strength, mental endurance, and even some parts of your Muay Thai game!

- TIPS FOR TRAINING IN HEAT -

It is hot as hell in Thailand. With that in mind, make sure you take some precautions when you are training in this heat. Here are five tips to dealing with training in the blistering heat when you arrive in Thailand.

- 1. Drink a ton of water.** It shouldn't need to be said, but it is super important to constantly be hydrating yourself before, during, and after your training sessions.
- 2. Pour water on yourself.** Cooling down your core body temperature never felt so good! After an intense pad session is a perfect time to pour some ice water over your head and on your shoulders.
- 3. Replenish electrolytes and salt intake.** In the [supplement section](#), I mentioned one of the electrolyte powders I use during my training sessions and I would highly recommend getting some of your own. Electrolytes and salt will help retain water which is important since you will be sweating like a pig.
- 4. Acclimate yourself.** If you have been in a cold climate the past few months or years, it will be a shock to your system dealing with the heat in Thailand. Give your body some time to adjust before pushing your limits.
- 5. Listen to your body.** Do not feel like you have to go 100% every time you train, especially when you first arrive. If you are feeling dizzy, light headed, or nauseous, don't try to be a tough guy by working through it!

- WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET SICK FROM THE HEAT -

Heat exhaustion sucks! I have dealt with my fair share of episodes where I've felt like my whole body is on fire and I am absolutely drained. If and when this happens to you, make sure you take these steps to make sure it doesn't get any worse:

1. Stop what you are doing and cool off.

Like I mentioned earlier, listen to your body and know when training is too much. Take off whatever equipment you have, find shade, and cool off your body temperature by pouring ice water over your head and body. If you are still feeling sick after training, consider taking an ice cold shower and/or buying a cooling pad to sleep with.

2. Rehydrate. Keep drinking water until your piss is clear and transparent. You will also want some electrolytes as well, but consuming too much in a rapid manner can make you feel even worse.

3. Go to a doctor. If things progressively get worse and for whatever reason you do not listen to any of the tips I previously mentioned, you should at the very least listen to this one. If you feel extremely sick you can't go wrong with heading to a doctor's office.



- COMMON INJURIES AND TREATMENTS -

Sorry to break it to you, but at some point in your Muay Thai career, you are going to get hurt. This could be something as little as a blister or black eye, or it could be more serious like a sprained ankle or broken bone. In any case, being mentally prepared for roadblocks and learning how to persist past these obstacles is key to any Nak Muay's career and your overall sanity.

Before I go into some of the common injuries, I want you to understand that when you are injured and can't train, it is not the end of the world! I have had minor injuries and serious injuries that have kept me away from the gym, but there are always other ways to improve yourself and stay productive that do not always have to relate directly to

training. To understand more what I mean, check out my post [The Benefits of Being Injured.](#)

Also don't be a dumbass. If you are seriously hurt, do not try to push through more training sessions and risk getting injured even worse. That being said, do not make excuses to why you can't train because of minor injuries or pains. In the end, you will have to learn to listen to your body and do what you feel is right.

Without further delay, here are seven common injuries to be prepared for:

1. SHIN SPLINTS

Cause: If you have ever had to deal with shin splints then you know how much they *suck!* They are caused by overuse of your legs (most typically from running, especially on hills) and can cause inflammation and a ton of pain just from walking around.

Treatment: Rest is obviously encouraged, but a lot of headstrong fighters will keep pushing through the pain regardless of how much it hurts. What you should do is take a few days off of running or skipping rope to let the inflammation heal. Other than that, making sure you have a solid pair of running shoes and good form when you are running are other factors that could help you avoid shin splints.

2. SPRAINED WRISTS

Cause: Usually sprained wrists stem from poor punching technique or not having your hands wrapped properly.

Treatment: Learn how to punch, yo! Also, [learn how to wrap your hands correctly](#) and make sure your boxing gloves are on nice and snug.

3. BRUISED RIBS

Cause: Getting punched, kicked or kneed in the ribs.

Treatment: Stop getting punch, kicked or kneed in the ribs. Take some time off from sparring and just use some common sense!

4. BLISTERS ON THE BOTTOM OF YOUR FEET

Cause: If you are training on carpet or tough material the friction from your foot and the ground will create blisters, especially when you are twisting while throwing a strike (mainly a kick.).

Treatment: Man the f*#! up! No seriously, that is probably not the best way to go about it. Like most injuries, resting it will do it the most good, or at the very least try to avoid kicking on carpet. If your blister is big, getting it drained by a local physician might be your best option.

DO NOT PICK AT YOUR BLISTER. I know it's gross and entertaining, but it will do more harm than good. If, for whatever reason, you cannot control your sick ways and you tear open your blister, then make sure to wash it with soap and water. You should also rub some anti-bacterial ointment on it with a bandage placed on top. Make sure to change the bandage daily or whenever it gets super dirty. If it gets infected, go to the hospital!



5. BEAT UP SHINS

Cause: Being a pansy.

Treatment: Stop being a pansy. If it is really hurting that bad, just work on your boxing for a few days while your shins heal or wear shin guards when you do kicking drills. Besides that, doing some sort of shin conditioning can be a major help in preventing you from becoming a pansy. Doing light sparring without shin guards and kicking hard heavy bags (or [banana trees if you want to be like Buakaw](#)) are the two most common, practical ways to build your shin strength.

If your shins are really jacked up and swollen, [Sylvie has a great video demonstrating how to treat your shins and flush out the excess fluid.](#)

6. ANKLE AND FOOT SPRAINS

Cause: Sprains suck because they seem to take forever to heal. They are usually caused by twisting your ankle or foot when running, doing pad work, sparring, or any other form of training.

Treatment: To prevent these injuries, doing ankle and calf strengthening exercises like calf raises are a good idea. If you end up still spraining your ankle or foot, the old fashion formula of R.I.C.E is recommended (rest, ice, compression, elevation) although there are more studies coming out stating that it might not be the best option.

7. STRAINED NECK

Cause: People yanking on your neck during clinch sessions.

Treatment: Make sure to warm up your neck before clinching by stretching it out. You can also do some neck strengthening exercises like the ones demonstrated in [this detailed article](#) or this one [demonstrated here by Sylvie](#).

- OVERTRAINING -

I get it, you are in Thailand and you want to train as hard - and as often - as possible. You want to make the most of your time in Thailand and “train like a Thai” by putting in two intense training sessions a day, six times a week. There is only one problem... you’re not a Thai.

Now, I am not saying that you won’t be able to handle the daily grind of training that the Thai’s go through, I am just asking the question, do you think it is worth it?

Yes, you will be putting in the hours when it comes to hitting pads, punching the bag, clinching, and skipping rope, but how many of those hours will you actually be focused on what you are doing? Will you be benefiting from the amount of hours you are putting in, or will it end up being more detrimental to your technique and overall health?

These are serious questions to consider, even if you are a hard ass who doesn’t believe in overtraining. You might believe that you can accomplish anything you set your mind to and push your body past its normal limitations, and for that, I applaud you. But all I am trying to get across is that sometimes *quantity* is not as beneficial *quality*, and overtraining is *real* whether you want to believe it or not.

- MY EXPERIENCE WITH OVERTRAINING AND WHY IT SUCKS -

I have had my fair share of experiences with overtraining (training too hard, too often) and let me tell you, it sucks major balls. You think I would learn after doing it so many times, and I pray that I finally have because it really makes my life miserable. To give you an idea what it is like, let me tell you what I go through when I experience overtraining.

First off, I hate life. I also hate everyone around me. I think everyone is out to get me and whenever someone approaches me to ask me if something is wrong or to console me, I assume they are trying to kill me, so I run away.

Since I am severely depressed and want to avoid any type of social interactions, I will lock myself in my room with the blinds closed and listen to sad music or watch a

depressing movie where the main character dies. The worst part of it all is feeling bad for myself and thinking that everything bad always happens to me... which it obviously doesn't.

While laying in solitude away from the light of day, I will also start to doubt what I am doing with my life and put some real deep thought into quitting. After my body and mind have been pushed so hard it puts up this defense mechanism to make me think twice about my training and lifestyle. I have had serious battles in my mind where I had to try to convince myself I still loved Muay Thai.

Besides the mental fatigue, my body will also feel extremely sore and fragile like I was in a 10 round fight where I lost every single round very, very badly. Getting up to use the bathroom becomes a chore and I start to curse the fact I you have to stand up to go anywhere. Damn you toilet and being seven steps away...

Did I mention the fever and body chills I get? Those might be the worst. One second I'm in the Sahara Desert looking for water, the next second I'm shivering like I have been stranded in the middle of Antarctica... it's not very pleasant.

- HOW YOU CAN AVOID OVERTRAINING -

To be honest, you will probably overtrain at least once in your lifetime if you plan on making a career out of Muay Thai. That being said, you can still limit the amount of times you overtrain and learn how to pick up on the warning signs so you can avoid it before it takes control.

The first way to avoid overtraining is by learning how to listen to your body and mind. This is way easier said than done and I do not expect you to know how to do this right away. It takes experience, practice, and making a ton of mistakes to understand how your body and mind work. However, you should be able to tell when you are pushing *too* hard because your body will start screaming at you and your mind will be begging you for mercy.

Keeping that in mind, there is a fine line between training hard enough to fight and training *too* hard where you overtrain. Like I mentioned earlier, chances are you will battle overtraining at least once in your career and it will take experience and awareness to figure out when you are pushing too hard.

Another way to avoid overtraining is to take scheduled days off regardless whether or not you feel like you can still train. Scheduled rest days are just as important as intense sparring sessions because your body needs time to rebuild and repair after grueling workouts. If you think you can continue pushing your body day after day for years and years while never giving it a rest, you are delusional.

Lastly, having a caring, aware trainer (or training partner) who knows your ability and fitness level will be a major help in keeping you from training too hard. This can be difficult if you are training in Thailand for a short amount of time because of the fact that your trainer probably won't know you well enough to know if you are actually overtraining or just being a little bitch.

- FINAL THOUGHTS ON OVERTRAINING -

Swallow your pride and be okay with the fact that you probably will not be able to train twice a day, six times a week like a Thai. If you think you can do it, by all means give it a try and see how you handle it, but just try to be aware of your body when doing so.

I have talked to and interviewed enough fighters and trainers to know that *quality* is far more important than *quantity*. Top guys, such as, Joseph Valtellini (ranked #3 in the GLORY Welterweight division as of writing this) is confident that he is where he is today because he takes a balanced approach on training. He schedules his rest days, focuses intently during his training sessions, and continues to learn how his body works each and every day.

Personally, after training in Thailand three times and trying to do the full-time training like the Thai's, I realized that I am much, much better off training Muay Thai once a day and doing a light run or workout the other half of the day. Not only have I felt it benefit my training since I am more focused and present when I am hitting pads or working certain techniques, but it has also helped my confidence and love for the sport grow since I am not burning myself out.

My advice would be this; if you want to train like a Thai, give a try! I don't want to deter you from trying to push your body and mind to the limit, I just want you to be aware of the possibility that you might not be able to keep up with the intense training that Thai's are born into.

If you do try to two-a-days and can't keep up for a couple weeks, don't get discouraged, it happens to the best of us. If you're able to train like a Thai, then good on you because I was never able to consistently do so. In the end, listen to your body and learn from your mistakes. Through experience and learning how your body works, you will eventually strike a perfect balance in your training where you are able to continuously improve and grow your passion for the sport!

- SUPPLEMENTS -

Most of you know me through Muay Thai Guy as someone who doesn't use a lot of supplements. Although that is true for the most part, I have become more educated and

open to the benefits that certain supplements can give to improve your training. This is especially the case when training in Thailand.

- WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER SUPPLEMENTING IN THAILAND -

Chances are that you will be eating your fair share of Thai food everyday. Although Thai food tastes delicious and has some nutritional qualities to it, you will most likely be missing out on key nutrients that help your body and mind function at 100%.

Not only will your diet be different, but so will the quantity and intensity of your training. If you are training twice a day, six times a week, you are going to need more nutrients than if you were to train once a day like most people do back in their home country. Also don't forget that you will be training in brutal heat a majority of the time, so having supplements that help retain water and fuel your body with electrolytes will be essential in keeping hydrated and energized.

Keep in mind that even if you were to take all the best supplements in the world, it won't matter if you are not eating a healthy, balanced diet. If you eat like shit and do not get proper nutrition from your daily meals, it won't matter what type, or how many supplements you take on a day-to-day basis.

So before you decide to go out and buy some N.O Xplode, Jack3d, or Muscle Milk, you might want to consider these alternatives which are not only healthier and more natural, but will also give you solid results that will improve your training.

Disclaimer: *Before making any decision with what supplements you put into your body, make sure you do your own independent research. Although these are the my personal favorite supplements that I would recommend to anyone, it does not mean that they are the only supplements out there. Check out customer reviews, read up on ingredients and come up with your own decisions before taking my advice (or anyone else's for that matter)*

Also, I am sponsored by [PNP Supplements](#), but keep in mind that I was using their supplements before they decided to sponsor me. I would recommend their stuff regardless whether or not they chose to have me as a sponsored athlete.

GLYCO-MUSCLE FUELER

Scientific studies have proven over and over again that carbohydrates are the best source of energy for athletes. Making sure you supply your body with the right type of carbohydrates before your training session is key for long-lasting energy, and Glyco-Muscle Fueler does just that.

I used to use hyped bodybuilding supplements like N.O. Xplode and Jack3d, which gave me a pump, but ultimately led me to feeling like I was destroying my body due to all the chemicals, sugars, and additives they had.

The Glyco Muscle Fueler gives me just as good of a pump (if not better and longer lasting) than any of the other pre-workout supplements I previously used. Not only that, but I don't feel a crash afterwards, possibly because it is sugar and gluten free.

[If you want to find out more about the ingredients and effects of Glyco-Muscle Fueler, click here.](#)



CARDIO SURGE ENERGY

In addition to using the Glyco-Muscle Fueler before my workouts, I also use Cardio Surge Energy which has noticeably improved my cardio during longer training sessions. The great thing about Cardio Surge Energy is that it is not full of caffeine or any other stimulants, so you don't feel jittery during your workouts, or burnt out afterwards.

One of the main benefits of Cardio Surge Energy is the fact that it is constantly flushing out lactic acid from your muscles which allows you to keep pushing during intense rounds on the pads or long roadwork sessions out in the heat. Not only does it improve your endurance during your workouts, but since it also removes metabolic waste and cell pollutants, it aids in your recovery and soreness so you are able to hit the gym hard again for your next session!



[If you want to know more reasons why Cardio Energy Surge is the shit, click here to read more.](#)

WHEY PROTEIN-5

Almost everybody knows that protein is the most important nutrient when it comes to building and repairing muscle. Without having a sufficient amount of protein after your workouts your muscles will not rebuild which in turn will leave to fatigue, atrophy, and burnout. There are a ton of post-workout protein supplements out there, but I use Whey Protein-5 for a few reasons:

- Just like all PNP Supplements, it's all scientific and shit.
- It includes bovine colostrum which helps in numerous ways such as improving your immune system, increasing your lean muscle growth, and supporting natural hormone growth.
- The digestive enzyme blend helps with absorption of protein which is great not only for your muscle growth, but for your digestive system too.
- It tastes great!



Don't just take my word on Whey Protein-5, [click here to read more about how it can benefit your training.](#)

RECOVER SURGE

Having a solid post-workout drink is essential to replenishing all the fluids and nutrients your body dispensed during an intense training session. If you neglect a post workout recovery drink, you won't get the full benefit of the workout and you can expect to be sore and fatigued the following day. Now that I am done lecturing you, let me tell you about Recover Surge.

Before I used Recover Surge, I used to make a [post-workout smoothie](#) after every training session. It had almost everything I needed to recover after a hard training session, but Recover Surge has even MORE. What I decided to do was to add Recover Surge to my smoothie so this way I get all the nutrition from my smoothie as well as all the benefits from Recover Surge which I don't get from my healthy foods:



- Branch chain amino acids blend
- A L-glutamine blend comprised of 4 different types of L-glutamine.
- A blend of 4 creatines and vanadium which aid in replenishing lost energy
- A muscle cleanse matrix which flushes out toxins that hinder recovery.

Having a multivitamin is especially important if you are living and training in Thailand since you will most likely be training twice-a-day, as well as, eating mainly Thai food, which, in most cases, lacks a good amount of the nutrients you are used to having back home.

[Click here to get more info and read reviews on Nature Made Multivitamins.](#)

BONE GROWTH FACTOR AND RAW CALCIUM

After suffering a broken arm in a fight, I have been a bit nervous about taking another kick in the same arm. Although the doctor said the bone should be stronger than it previously was, I decided not to take any second chances and buy some bone density supplements to give me some piece of mind.

Since I am skeptical about supplements in general, I did a decent amount of research before deciding on these supplements. Although there are a handful of negative reviews (which every supplement has), I found overwhelming positive reviews and case studies that show improvement in bone density in health after taking Bone Growth Factor and Raw Calcium,



Now, this might not be a supplement I would recommend to everyone, but it wouldn't hurt to give a try if you wanted to ensure you have healthy and strong bones. [Click here to read reviews on Amazon and find out more about the Bone Growth System.](#)

GLUCOSAMINE AND CHONDROITON

I've been dealing with some knee pain the past few years and figured I would try to do something about it besides trying to tough it out and ignore it. After searching the web, I came across Glucosamine and Chondroitin which seemed to get great reviews in reducing pain and aiding in joint mobility.

Glucosamine and chondroitin are natural supplements found in and around cell cartilage. Since they are natural products of the body, it made sense to me that I probably needed more of it in order to help with the joint pain I was suffering from. After

reading case studies and scientific research that showed how taking these supplement pills significantly reduced the pain in around 79% of test subjects, I figured I would give it a shot!

I have only been using this supplement for a few months now but have noticed some pain reduction in my right knee, which was previously giving me the most issues. If you have joint issues, [click here to read more about Glucosamine and Chondroitin](#).



ELECTROLYTE POWDER

While training in Thailand, it is *super* important to stay hydrated and drink lots of water due to it being ridiculously hot year round. That being said, water does not have things like sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium, which are all important in providing you with sufficient amounts of energy.

I tend to choose the ones I see first in Thai pharmacies which are Dechamp or Oredo. To be honest though, I haven't done too much research behind which ones are the best and most beneficial for my training, so I encourage you to look into it if you decide to add electrolyte powders to your training mix.



OTHER SUPPLEMENTS TO CONSIDER

Since there are so many supplements to choose from it can be overwhelming figuring out which ones you should be using and which ones you should be staying away from. With that being said before you decide on any supplements make sure you look into them yourself before making a purchase. Here are a few other supplements to consider adding to your training:

Green Tea Extract - Green tea extract is proven to provide numerous benefits with the most important ones (in terms of training) being; reducing inflammation, improve brain function, improve immune system, and increases your metabolism which in turns helps burn fat.

Fish Oil - Chances are you don't eat food that is high in omega-3 fatty acids every day, so supplementing with fish oil pills is a great way to add more of this important nutrient to your diet. Fish oil improves your brain function, increases energy, and benefits your health in a load of other ways.

Branched Chain Amino Acids - BCAA's provide your body with 3 essential amino-acids that it doesn't regularly produce; Isoleucine, leucine and valine. Adding these to your body will help in recovery after an intense session and prevent post-workout soreness.

- FINAL THOUGHTS ON SUPPLEMENTS -

I am sure there are plenty more supplements out there that are beneficial, but I wanted to just mention the ones I'm familiar with.

If you would like to share your input, I'd love to hear what supplements *YOU* use as part of your training routine. [Click here to go to Muay Thai Guy and leave a comment at the bottom of the page!](#)

- CHAPTER 6: FIGHTING -

It goes without saying that fighting in Thailand is different than fighting anywhere else in the world. Not only are you fighting in the home country where Muay Thai originated, but you are fighting a wide variety of opponents that can range from experienced foreign champions to fat, out of shape tuk-tuk drivers. Either way, it is sure to be a story to tell!

Stepping into the ring to test your skills is not for everyone, but if you do decide to challenge yourself and take that leap, then there are a few things to consider before doing so.

- ARE YOU READY TO FIGHT? -

This is a common question a lot of Nak <uay ask themselves when they are considering fighting for the first time. Even more experienced fighters still have to ask themselves the same question throughout their fight career. There are three main factors that will come into play when figuring out whether you are ready to fight or not:

TRAINING

If you haven't put the time and effort in with your training, you are not going to be ready for a fight. You can't half ass your workouts or skip training sessions if you plan on being successful in the ring. You are playing a dangerous game if you decide to slack off with your training when it is leading up to a fight.

Think of it this way - when you are slacking off, your opponent is working his ass off waiting for his chance to kick your ass and hurt you. When you are lying on the couch eating like shit, your opponent is doing a long distance run and fueling his body with essential vitamins and minerals. When you are going through the motions on the heavy bag, your opponent is using his laser-like focus to improve his technique and conditioning.

Muay Thai is a dangerous sport, and taking your training lightly will ultimately put you in some serious danger.

When it comes to training back in your home country, chances are you have other responsibilities that you need to take care of (work, family, life), so it can be difficult finding the time to train for a fight. In Thailand, you no longer have an excuse. You have all day everyday to work on your craft and sharpen your skills, it is just a matter of staying focused and avoiding the many distractions that Thailand has to offer.

The purpose of training is to teach your muscles and mind the techniques needed to dissect your opponent and ultimately win. Through bag work you will be able to focus on your favorite techniques and combinations and repeat them until you do them subconsciously. When you are doing pad work you will be able to work on counters, pushing the pace and controlling your breathing. And most importantly, with sparring you will be putting your skills to the test. You will be able to test out to see which combos work, which counters are most effective, and what type of defensive maneuvers will get you out of harms way.

Without the constant drilling and training, you will be a big step behind your opponent. If you think too much in a fight about what you want to do it is going to cause a split second delay which can prove costly. On the other hand, if you fight on instinct and training, it leaves no time to think and your techniques, combinations, and movements will flow much more seamlessly.

MENTALITY

Confidence is key. Yes, there will be doubt, confusion, anxiety, fear, and a whole bunch of other negative emotions leading up to the fight, but if you are confident you put in the work in the gym, you'll be staring at your opponent across the ring ready to brawl.

Building a confident mentality comes back to training hard and with focus. The harder you train and the more zoned in you are, the more likely you are going to feel like a caged beast ready to be unleashed. If you are constantly pushing yourself and sharpening your techniques then you should have no worries stepping into the ring knowing that you have done everything possible to be prepared to fight.

However, if you take unnecessary days off, half ass your training, and eat mindlessly, then you are much more likely to be less confident leading up to fight night... and do you want any excess stress, doubt, or anxiety? I don't think so.

Try these two mental exercises to help relieve the anxiety before a fight:

VISUALIZATION

Picturing the whole fight event in your head is a great way to relieve some of the anxiety you get before the fight. If you take the time to visualize in detail I guarantee that the level of anxiety and nervousness you might normally feel will be taken down a notch. Many professional fighters and sports psychologists recommend this mental training strategy because *it works*. It might take a little getting used to but once you are able to clearly picture your upcoming fight, you will notice a major drop in anxiety and an overall positive change in your mindset.

This is what I would recommend trying (this is what I do and what works for me):

- *Put yourself in quiet surroundings, away from noise and distraction.*
- *Choose to visualize yourself in either 1st or 3rd person (I usually do 1st).*
- *Start picturing how the whole event will unfold and visualize from there – the rules meeting, getting your hands wrapped, warming up, walking to the ring, going through your pre-fight ritual, getting your name announced etc.*
- *Visualize the fight itself! Think about what techniques you want to throw, how you will go about defending, what kind of pace you want to set etc.*
- *Be as detailed as you can in every area of the visualization process. What shorts are you wearing? What does the arena look like? Are there a lot of fans in the stand?*

Every time you visualize the fight chances are there will be a number of different versions, but this is a good thing! The more situations you put in your head, the more comfortable and ready you will feel when those specific situations arise.

Make sure to visualize *in detail*. Do it numerous times so when fight night comes you have already warmed up, walked to the ring, and won the fight (in your mind). However, do not forget to visualize conflict and tough situations because your opponent is going to most likely be a tough, game fighter. If you picture yourself walking through your opponent without any type of adversity, you are going to be in a world of shock when you realize it is not as easy as you thought.

I would recommend checking out [this great video](#) that walks you through how to visualize and mentally prepare for a fight.

MEDITATION

Another great way to prepare your mind for a fight is meditation. Meditation is different than visualization because when you meditate you are trying to clear your mind completely of any thoughts. When you first start meditating, it will feel like there are a million different thoughts going through your head that you can't settle or organize in any way. As you practice more and become more capable of calming your thoughts and focusing on your breathing, you will become less stressed, anxious, and worried you will be.

Try out these few basic steps:

- *Put yourself in quiet surroundings, away from noise and distraction*
- *Start by focusing on your breathing. Take deep breaths and feel the breaths go in and out.*
- *Your mind will begin to drift to random thoughts (this is where it gets tough). Acknowledge and observe whatever thoughts come into your mind, but then go straight back to focusing on your breathing.*

In the beginning ,your mind will be full of random thoughts that will distract you from

your breathing. It's ok! When that happens try to be aware of your thoughts, let them pass and refocus on your breathe. As you progress in your meditation practice you will have longer periods of time between your thoughts and your mind will become much more clear and aware during the process.

This mental training exercise will probably be frustrating at first, so don't expect you to be as enlightened as a Buddhist monk who has been practicing it for years in complete solitude. However, if you have the patience, dedication, and perseverance to practice meditation, in time you will notice a major difference in your thought process and overall outlook on life.

If you want more help to mentally prepare for a fight, make sure to [listen to the Muay Thai Guy Podcast episodes 13 and 24.](#)

SUPPORTING TEAM

Having people around you who believe in you and have your best interest at heart is one of the most overlooked aspects of fighting. Although fighting might be an individual sport in the sense that you are the one doing the fighting, it is your team that will help you prepare both mentally and physically for your fight.

With a solid trainer pushing you day in and day out, you can expect to improve your cardio, technique, and overall mindset knowing that you are being challenged by someone who knows what they are doing. With a solid group of training partners you will most likely be pushing harder during your training sessions and get more quality work when you are sparring and clinching, which is a huge advantage stepping into the ring.

All that being said, there are plenty of bad trainers that do not care about your well-being. In Thailand it is very common for gyms to push foreigners to fight despite whether or not they are ready. This can be due to many reasons, but usually it is for some sort of financial gain. It's important to know what to look for in a trainer, so make sure to [check out this great, in-depth article from MuayThaiPros.com about choosing the right trainer.](#)

- WHAT TO EXPECT FIGHTING IN THAILAND -

You're not in Kansas anymore. You're in a far away land where you don't have any fan fare (unless you brought them over with you) and you don't have the team you normally train with at home. Besides those two differences, you'll also have to consider these:

YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU ARE FIGHTING

Ok maybe not *never*, but 99% of the time, you will be stepping into the ring against someone you have never heard or seen before in your life. You might see posters and billboards of yourself and your potential opponent, but usually that is just to promote the fight and isn't the actual match-up.

Since you won't know your opponent, you will not be able to find any video or do any scouting prior to fight night. If you are lucky, your trainers might catch word on who you are fighting and give you some general advice if they know who he/she is. Either way, you better be prepared.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU ARE FIGHTING

Ok, that's just a straight up lie, but I wanted to get your attention. Most of the time you will know what date you are fighting and be able to prepare accordingly, however, it is very common for trainers and gym owners to pressure you to take fights on short notice, sometimes even the night of the fight. Be smart about this!



Keep in mind that there is no shortage of fighters and there will *always* be fight opportunities for you. Feeling like you owe it to the gym or trainers to fight is the wrong way to go about deciding whether or not you should take a short notice fight. It is very common for trainers to pressure you to fight even if it is not in your best interest. So before making a decision, make sure you take into consideration everything before saying yes or no:

Are you healthy and ready to fight?

Have you been training hard and would you feel confident going into the ring?

Are you mentally ready to fight?

Do you want to fight? Or do you feel pressured to fight?

Although it can be a good opportunity to fight on short notice, you have to develop the self awareness to know whether or not it's the right choice. Make sure never to give an immediate response and think twice about before you make your decision

YOU PROBABLY WON'T HAVE TO CUT WEIGHT

For most match-ups in Thailand (other than the fights at top stadiums) you will not have to deal with the stress of cutting weight. However, if you do need to cut weight, make sure you do it the right way. You can [check out my tips here](#) or go even in more detail and [read my guide and sample weight cut meal plan in Cut, Refuel, Fight.](#)

WARM-UPS ARE NOT WHAT YOU ARE USED TO

Want to hit pads? Too bad. Instead, you will be getting doused in Thai liniment and rubbed down by 2-3 Thai trainers all at once. After you have essentially bathed in Thai liniment, the rest of your warm up will consist of doing some stretching and shadowboxing before you step into the ring.

I understand that you might be used to a whole warm-up process that you have perfected back home, but now you are in Thailand, so you better be ready to switch it up. Obviously some camps might differ in their warm ups and some might actually even bring pads (that would just be crazy), and in that case, just follow whatever routine your trainers have in place for you.

THERE WILL BE MISMATCHES, GET USED TO IT

You could either end up fighting an out of shape tuk-tuk driver or a foreign champion with 10x more fight experience than you... isn't that exciting? Be prepared for a war against a tough opponent, but do not be surprised if you end up being the one with the upper hand. It is very common to have some easy fights in places like Phuket, especially when you first start fighting and the promoters aren't sure of your skill level. After fighting a handful of times they will be able to match you up properly and give you the challenge you have been looking for.

All this being said, make sure you do not take anyone lightly. A fat tuk-tuk driver is capable of knocking you out with a hard elbow just as much as a ripped Lumpinee champion is (although obviously the chances of this happening depend on the skill level of the opponent).

If you want to know more about possible match ups you can run into make sure you [check out the post by MuayThaiPros about the 5 potential match-ups you could end up in.](#)

THERE WILL BE GAMBLING, GET USED TO IT

With gambling being a big part of the sport, some shady sh@! goes on every now and then at events all around the country. The betting can dictate the way the fights are judged and scored, so do not be surprised if you see some fights go one way when they should have obviously went another.

That being said, this kind of stuff happens in America and all over the world as well, and they don't even allow gambling! There will always be bad judging and some kind of shady doings that happen behind the scene. Just be aware that the gambling in Thailand could possible play a role in your fight.

THE SCORING SYSTEM IS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT YOU'RE USED TO

Chances are that the judges in your home country score fights a completely different way than the judges score fights in Thailand. This can be a good and bad thing depending on your fight style and your ability to adapt to rules and scoring systems. One of the biggest differences in scoring is that in Thailand they reward skill rather than brute aggression. Most commissions will give the fighter who is constantly moving forward aggressively the nod, but in Thailand it does not matter if you are aggressive, it matters if you have effective and in control of your technique.

To learn more about the scoring in Thailand [this in-depth breakdown will supply you with basically everything you need to know:](#)

DO NOT EXPECT MUCH PAY

Whether you are in Thailand or not, do not expect to make that much money when you first start fighting. Fighting consistently while building your record and reputation will be the most important factors to actually making a living off your fight purse.

Where you fight also plays a major role in how much you get paid. In places like Phuket you can expect anywhere between 4000 - 6000 baht, with a percentage of it going to the gym. Up in Chiang Mai you can expect to get paid even less. If you happen to make it to the big stage in Bangkok whether it is at Lumpinee or Rajadamnern, you still won't be making that much at all. Good thing you are not in the sport for the money, right?

- SHOWING RESPECT -

In my opinion, being respectful should be one of your top priorities as a fighter and as a person. There are plenty of douche bags who fight for the wrong reasons and act arrogantly whether it's in the gym or in the ring. Don't be that douche bag.

You know the type of person I'm talking about, right? The one who takes sparring way too seriously in the gym and makes excuses or states that he wasn't trying when he gets tagged. He also loves to brag about his accomplishments (usually which are over-exaggerated or non-existent) and talk about himself whenever the opportunity presents itself.

This same douche will enter the ring with zero background knowledge of the traditions of Muay Thai and show zero respect to his trainers, his opponent, and the sport as a whole. He will neglect all of the pre-fight rituals, showboat during a fight, and show little class after the fight regardless if he wins or loses. To help you avoid becoming this person that everyone secretly wants to get knocked out, make sure you follow these tips and consider doing these pre-fight rituals:

- PRE FIGHT RITUALS -

MONGKON/MONGKOL

The Mongkon (or mongkol) is a type of sacred headpiece worn by most Muay Thai boxers before fighting. Traditionally, a trainer will present it to you once he feels that you have trained hard, have prepared to fight, and have learned some of the culture behind certain Muay Thai traditions.

Most commonly you will see Mongkons which are made up of rope, thread, and silk material that are woven together. It is very common for most practitioners (whether Buddhist or not) to bring the headdress to a Buddhist monk who blesses the Mongkon with good luck.

As I was taught by my trainer in Thailand, the Mongkon is a symbol of your gym, your trainers, and your family. You wear it when you enter the ring to show that when you fight it's not all about you, it is about the people around you who have helped you along your journey.



After you seal the ring and/or perform the ceremonial [wai kru ram muay](#), your trainer will say a short prayer while taking the Mongkon off your head and then placing it on top of the ring. The Mongkon should never be close to or held near the ground since it is bad

luck to do so. Also if you happen to be a lady, you might not be allowed to wear one since it's deemed bad luck to be touched by a woman. However, most gyms have adopted a more open-minded approach and will allow women to enter the ring with one on.

PRAJIOUD

The Prajioud (arm bands) were traditionally made from a torn piece of a mother's surong (dress, skirt, cloth) and then given to be tied on the arm before Muay Thai fights for good luck and protection. This tradition was originated during times of war where mother's would see their sons go off to combat and offer them their blessings as they left.

You will see a handful of fighters wear them today, but by no means are they mandatory to wear. They can often become a distraction or annoyance if they aren't tied properly.

CLIMBING OVER THE ROPES

As a man, it's customary to enter the ring by climbing over the top ropes. Since in the Thai culture the head is considered sacred and the feet are considered dirty, it's important to keep your head above your feet when entering the ring. On the other side of the coin, women are supposed to enter the ring by going underneath the ropes. There are a lot of sexist traditions that go along with Muay Thai, but if you are in their country participating in their sport, you are best off respecting their traditions.

WAI KRU RAM MUAY

The wai kru is a way of paying your respects to your teacher and to those who have helped you along your journey. It can also help to calm pre-fight jitters, clear the ring of bad luck/evil spirits, and show your skill and ability to do the wai kru itself. Some wai kru are customized depending on the gym or religion the fighters practice. You will see plenty of fighters like John Wayne Parr or [Buakaw put unique spins on the wai kru](#) to add a little spice to the show.

You don't necessarily have to do the wai kru if you decide to fight, but it would be a good idea to show respect to your trainers and gym by at least sealing the four corners of the ring. If you do decide to perform the whole wai kru, it will show that you are dedicated to the sport and actually care about helping preserve some of the traditions that make this sport so unique and great.

SAK YANT TATTOOS

The meanings and spiritual powers of [sak yant tattoos](#) like the 5 lines, the tiger and hanuman are meant to give fighters protection, good luck, success, and other desirable attributes. All sak yant tattoos are traditionally done by practicing Buddhist monks with bamboo needles. Using single bamboo needles takes much longer and is more painful than newer tattoo guns they use in most shops. It is supposedly bad luck if you get a sak yant thai tattoo done by someone who is not a Buddhist monk and doesn't use a bamboo stick. This means the bearer of the fake sak yant will not be blessed with the supernatural or sacred powers it supposedly possesses. If you believe in these superstitions, you must get it done the right way to get the full spiritual effect of any of sak yant.

- SHOULD YOU FIGHT? -

That's a question nobody else can answer but yourself. But if you want my opinion, here it is:

Yes, you should fight!

If you have been putting in the time and effort in the gym and training your ass off you might as well test your skills. Whether you want to make Muay Thai a career or just have a fight to see what you are made of, it is an incredible experience that only the courageous people take part in.

Also, look it at this way; training tirelessly for days on end and not fighting is like practicing baseball and never playing a game. You are practicing Muay Thai, but are you ever going to take the next step and actually *play* it? Regardless if you win or lose, as long as you go out there and fight with heart, you have got nothing in the world to worry about.

Now, even though I am encouraging you to fight, do not feel like you have to! Like I mentioned earlier in this section, only *you* can figure out whether or not you actually want to fight or not. Your friends, family, training partners, or trainers might be pressuring you to fight, but if you don't feel ready to step into the ring, then don't worry about it!

Plus, there are so many things that can happen that can change your mind one way or another. You might think you want to fight now, but then get cold feet when the time comes to fight in Thailand. Or maybe you are currently petrified of fighting, but after spending a couple months training in Thailand, you might end up wanting to test yourself in the ring... who knows!

Sylvie from 8limbs.us has been living, training and fighting in Thailand for a few years now and has some great perspectives on this topic. Check out these two great posts:

[Why Your Muay Thai Dreams Might Not Come True](#)

[How Do You Know When You're Ready To Fight?](#)

Also make sure to check out [my podcast interview](#) about her training and life in Thailand for even more insight!

Lastly, I want leave you with one of my favorite quotes of all time just to get you thinking:

"How much can you know about yourself if you've never been in a fight?" - Fight Club

- RESOURCES -

Want to go in even more depth about life in Thailand? Below I have listed some of the best resources for life in Thailand that I've used during my travels and research for this guide. Enjoy!

MUAY THAI IN THAILAND WEBSITES

8limbs.us

[Fightland Vice](#)

[Fight Passport](#)

[Muay Farang](#)

[Muay Thai 2000](#)

[Muay Thai Camps Thailand](#)

[Muay Thai Pros](#)

[Under The Ropes](#)

GENERAL THAILAND WEBSITES

[A Farang Abroad](#)

[About Thailand](#)

[Expatriate Exchange](#)

[Expatriate Focus](#)

[Phuket 101](#)

[Thailand Tourism](#)

[Tieland To Thailand](#)

FORUMS

[Ajarn](#)

[Expatriate Forum](#)

[Lonely Planet](#)

[Muay Thailand](#)

[Thai Visa](#)

[Thailand Q&A](#)

JOBS

[Ajarn](#)

[Thai Visa](#)

[Visa Hunter](#)

- KEEP IN TOUCH! -

Whether it's before, during, or after you make your trip to Thailand, make sure you keep in touch and let me know how everything is going! Feel free to shoot me any questions, comments, or feedback at sean@muay-thai-giuy.com.

If this guide has helped you in any way, I would *love* to hear from you about how you enjoyed it and how it helped you with your travels to Thailand. If you think there are certain ways I can improve it, please don't hesitate to let me know. I love hearing from passionate people like yourself and if you take the time to email me, I promise I will take the time to email you back.

SIGN UP FOR MUAY THAI NATION!

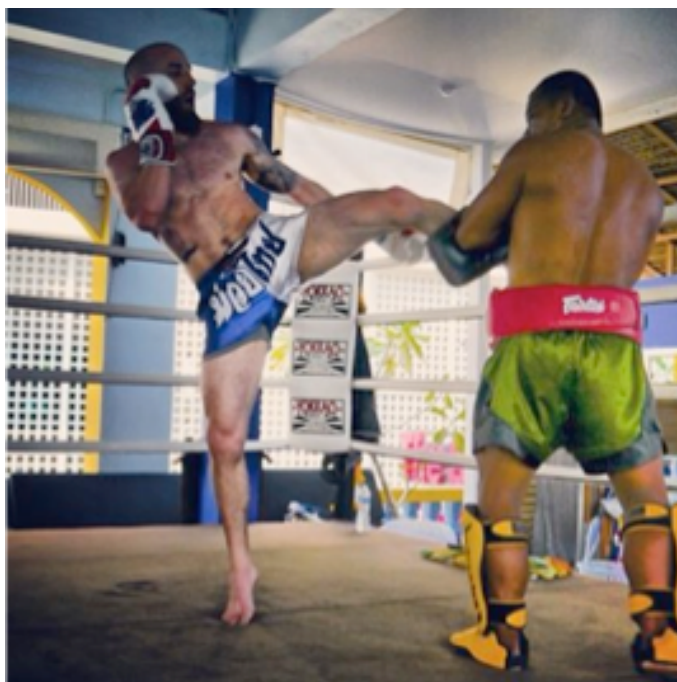
Speaking of email, make sure you [sign up for my email updates and monthly newsletter!](#) You will receive training tips, fight news, technique videos, fight videos, special discounts, healthy recipes, and much more. Not only that, but when you sign up you get two free bonuses that will help feed your Muay Thai addiction!

FOLLOW MY TRAINING JOURNAL AND VIDEO BLOG

I've been keeping a training journal and video blog of my experiences in Thailand. If you want some insight for what it is like living in Thailand, following along with my journey is definitely a good start. Check out the places I've trained, things I've done, and get an inside look to what my life is like in Thailand!

[Click here to check out my training journal.](#)

[Click here to subscribe to my youtube channel and video blog.](#)



GET 50% OFF MY OTHER TRAINING GUIDES!

If you want to improve your training even further, then consider purchasing my previous guides that are guaranteed to help you with your training! Enter the code “thailand” and you will receive 50% any future purchases of these guides:

Muay Thai Mastery - This guide is perfect for beginners and fighters looking to improve their training routine and mindset before stepping into the ring. It will give you the rundown for what to expect when you first fight and give you all the information you need to feel prepared and confident for when you step into the ring.



Cut, Refuel, Fight - This simple weight cutting guide is more or less the same exact routine I follow when I cut from 165lbs to 145lbs for my fights. It has weight cutting methods, a 4-week sample meal plan, refueling tips, and more tips to help make your weight cut seamless and effective.

Fuel The Fighter - Having trouble with your diet or eating habits? This guide was made for people who need some guidance when it comes to figuring out what to eat to get the most out of their training. Whether you want to lose weight, gain weight, or maintain your weight, this crash course in nutrition will supply you with over 50 recipes plus useful guidelines to ensure you reach whatever nutrition goals you have.



[Click here to purchase all three of them for a special discount!](#)

INTERACT IN THE MUAY THAI NATION FORUMS

Interact with me and other like-minded people in the Muay Thai Nation forums!

These forums have been along for a couple years now and are starting to pick up with help from the Muay Thai Guy community. I'm in there consistently talking about certain Muay Thai topics and there are a bunch of other passionate, knowledgeable nak muay who are more than happy to talk Muay Thai. [Click here to check the forums out!](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

[Facebook](#)
[Youtube](#)

[Twitter](#)
[Tumblr](#)

[Google +](#)
[Pinterest](#)

THANK YOU!!!

Thank you so much for purchasing my guide and supporting Muay Thai Guy.

It's been quite a journey so far with plenty of ups and downs, but I know I wouldn't be where I am today without the support of passionate fans and followers like yourself. Like I mentioned before, if you have any questions, comments, input, or advice, contact me at sean@muay-thai-guy.com and I will get back to you once I get a chance.

I hope you learned a lot from reading this guide, and I hope all the tools, resources and information it has helps you make your Thailand trip a reality. Make sure to let me know how your time in Thailand goes! Best of luck!

