

USC MARSHALL SCHOOL EMBA EXPORT CLASS 41
HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM / BANGKOK, THAILAND
OCTOBER 10TH – 17TH, 2026

USEFUL DESTINATION INFORMATION

WEATHER

- **Ho Chi Minh City (October):** Expect a tropical climate with average temperatures ranging from **75°F to 89°F (24°C to 32°C)**. October is the tail-end of the wet season, meaning short, heavy afternoon downpours are common. Pack a compact umbrella or light rain shell.
- **Bangkok (October):** Similar tropical warmth with temperatures around **77°F to 90°F (25°C to 32°C)**. Brief tropical showers can happen.

CLOTHING

Smart casual / business casual for company visits. When visiting temples or formal venues in Bangkok, shoulders and knees *must* be covered (no shorts, sleeveless tops, or sandals without heel straps). You should consult your professor about the type of clothing suitable for visits to businesses, corporations, etc.

MONEY

- **Vietnam Currency:** Vietnamese Dong (VND). Major credit cards are widely accepted at the Park Hyatt and established restaurants, but local cash is required for street markets, small souvenir shops, and taxis.
- **Thailand Currency:** Thai Baht (THB). Cash is highly preferred for small vendors, public transit, and casual dining.
- **Money Exchange:** You can exchange money at SGN/BKK airports upon arrival, at the hotel front desk, or at nearby banks recommended by the hotel concierge.
- **Card Safeguards:** Remember to notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel dates to Vietnam and Thailand to avoid automatic fraud freezes.

At the time of writing, the exchange rate is:

Vietnam Dong (VND)		Thai Baht (THB)	
\$1.00 USD	=	25,992.00 VND	\$1.00 USD = 33.41 THB
\$20.00 USD	=	519,840.00 VND	\$29.93 USD = 1,000.00 THB

TIPPING

Tipping is appreciated particularly for hotel staff but not generally mandatory.

HEALTH

Inoculations

No special inoculations or vaccinations are generally required for travel in Saigon and Bangkok. Check with your doctor or log on to <http://www.cdc.gov/> for more information.

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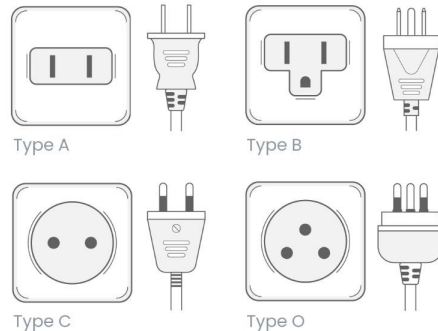
USEFUL DESTINATION INFORMATION

BOTTLED WATER

- **Vietnam:** Drink **bottled or purified water** rather than tap water. Use bottled water when brushing your teeth if you are unsure about the local water supply.
- **Thailand:** In general, travelers should choose **bottled or purified water** rather than tap water.
- Bottled water is commonly provided by hotels.
- Bottled water will be provided in the bus during the company visits.
- Keep a bottle with you throughout the day, especially when sightseeing in warm weather.
- Avoid ice if you are unsure whether it was made from purified water.
- Check that the bottle is **properly sealed** before drinking.

ELECTRICITY

- **Vietnam:** Uses **Type A, C, and F** plugs. The standard voltage is 220V. Most modern hotels have universal outlets that accommodate US-style two-prong plugs (Type A), but a universal travel adapter is recommended.
- **Thailand:** Uses **Type A, B, C, and O** plugs. The standard voltage is 220V. Most luxury outlets accommodate standard US two-prong plugs, but a universal adapter is recommended especially for devices with three-prong plugs or grounded connections.
- Most phone and laptop chargers are designed for **100–240V** and only require a plug adapter. Check the voltage rating on your device before plugging it in.



COMMUNICATIONS

- When calling Ho Chi Minh (Saigon) from the United States, dial **011 + 84** (Vietnam country code) + **28** (HCMC area code) + (phone number).
- When calling Bangkok from the United States, dial **011 + 66** (Thailand country code) + **2** (Bangkok area code) + (phone number).
- When calling to United States, dial the international code, **00 + 1** + (area code) + (phone number).

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TRANSPORTATION

HO CHI MINH (SAIGON)

- **Taxis:** Metered taxis are widely available. Use reputable taxi companies or have your hotel arrange a taxi.
- **Ride-hailing: Grab** is widely used in Ho Chi Minh City and offers both car and motorbike services. Travelers can book and pay through the app.
- **Walking:** Many attractions in District 1 are within walking distance of one another but be cautious when crossing busy streets.
- **Motorbikes:** Motorbikes are extremely common in Saigon. Travelers should use extra caution when crossing streets and should not assume traffic will stop for pedestrians.
- **Public transportation:** The **Ho Chi Minh City Metro** is available, but for most visitors staying in the central area, taxis and ride-hailing services are generally more convenient.

BANGKOK

- **BTS Skytrain & MRT:** Bangkok's elevated BTS Skytrain and underground MRT are convenient ways to avoid traffic and reach many popular areas.
- **Taxis:** Metered taxis are widely available. Ask the driver to use the meter, or have your hotel arrange a taxi.
- **Ride-hailing: Grab** is widely used in Bangkok and is a convenient option for booking cars.
- **Tuk-tuks:** A fun way to experience Bangkok but **agree on the fare before your ride**. Tuk-tuks generally do not use meters.
- **Walking:** Walking can be enjoyable in central areas, but Bangkok can be very hot and humid. Allow extra time and stay alert when crossing streets.
- **Boats:** Chao Phraya River boats and hotel shuttle boats can be useful for reaching riverside attractions and avoiding road traffic.

TIME

Ho Chi Minh (Saigon) & Bangkok is currently 14 hours ahead of Los Angeles.

Los Angeles	9:00am	HCMC/BKK	11:00pm
HCMC/BK	9:00am	Los Angeles	7:00pm the day before

GENERAL HOURS OF OPERATION

HCMC (Saigon)

- **Shops:** 9:00 AM–9:00 PM, with many larger shopping malls open until 10:00 PM.
- **Restaurants:** 10:00 AM–10:00 PM. Many restaurants open earlier for breakfast, while some stay open later into the evening.
- **Banks:** 8:00 AM–4:30 PM, Monday–Friday, often with a midday lunch break. Some branches open on Saturday mornings.
- **Markets:** 6:00/7:00 AM–6:00/7:00 PM, although some markets have evening or night-market hours.
- **Museums & attractions:** 7:30/8:00 AM–5:00 PM, although hours vary by attraction and some close for a midday break.
- **Convenience stores:** Many locations operate 24 hours in central Ho Chi Minh City.

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Bangkok

- **Shops & shopping malls:** 10:00 AM–10:00 PM. Most major shopping malls are open daily.
- **Restaurants:** 10:00 AM–10:00 PM, although breakfast restaurants may open earlier and some restaurants and bars stay open later.
- **Banks:** 8:30 AM–3:30 PM, **Monday–Friday**. Some branches in shopping malls have extended hours and may open on weekends.
- **Markets:** Hours vary widely. Traditional markets often open early in the morning, while **night markets** typically operate from late afternoon into the evening.
- **Museums & attractions:** 9:00 AM–5:00 PM, with some attractions staying open later. Many museums are closed one day, per week.
- **Convenience stores:** 7-Eleven and other convenience stores are widely available, with many locations operating 24 hours.
- **Pharmacies:** 9:00 AM–8:00 PM, although hours vary and some pharmacies operate 24 hours.

TRAVELER'S RESOURCES

Before You Go

- **U.S. Department of State:** Check the latest travel advisories, entry requirements, passport information, and embassy contacts.
- **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** Review recommended vaccines, health notices, food and water safety, and other health information.
- **Airline & Hotel Websites:** Confirm flight schedules, baggage policies, check-in information, and hotel details before departure.
- **U.S. Embassy / Consulate:** Contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for assistance with emergencies involving U.S. citizens.
- **Local Emergency Services:** Save the local emergency numbers in your phone before traveling.

Useful Travel Apps

- **Google Maps** – Directions, walking routes, attractions, restaurants, and business hours.
- **Grab** – Ride-hailing and food delivery; widely used in both Vietnam and Thailand.
- **Google Translate** – Translate text, menus, signs, and conversations. Download Vietnamese and Thai language packs for offline use.
- **WhatsApp** – Convenient for communicating with family, friends, and other travelers.
- **XE Currency** – Check exchange rates and convert Vietnamese Dong (VND) and Thai Baht (THB) to U.S. dollars.
- **Your bank/credit card app** – Monitor transactions and receive travel notifications while abroad.
- **Airline app** – Check flight status, boarding passes, gate information, and schedule changes.

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USEFUL BASIC WORDS & GREETINGS

Vietnamese Language

- Chao (chow): Hello
- Ong (or Ba, Anh, Co): How are you?
- Cam on (cam un): Thank you
- Khong hieu (kowm hee-you): I don't understand
- Ten toi la... (tain toy la): My name is...
- Bao nhieu? (bow new): How much?
- Toi muon mua...(toy moo-on moo-ah): I'd like to buy...
- Nuoc suoi (nook sooeey): Bottled water
- dau...? (uh dow): Where is...?
- Cong an (kowm an): Police
- Khach san (kak san): Hotel
- Nam (nam): Man
- Nu (noo): Woman

Thai Language

- I don't understand = May Cow J
- No thanks = May cup
- Hello = Sawa dee
- Thank you = Ka poon cup/ ka poon Ka
- How are you? = Coon Sabbi dee may
- I am fine, thanks = Pom Sabbi dee cup / Ka
- I don't Know = May Roo
- What is the time = Gee mong lowal
- Water = Nam
- Ice = Nam kang
- Hot Water = Nam Ron
- Cold Water = Nam Yen
- I don't know = Pom may roo
- When = Mar rye
- Good = Dee
- Very Good = Dee mark
- Bad = Leeoo or May Dee
- Hot Day = Dad lon
- Cold wind = Lom yen
- Bathroom/Toilet = Hung Nam
- Wait = Cooy