



Personal kit list for the expedition to Thailand

General

The purchase of equipment for your expedition can be tricky and you should take extra care when putting together your personal expedition kit. Where possible keep the cost sensible and try to borrow any items that you can from your friends, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award department or Combined Cadet Force (CCF) if you have them at your school/college. Do not spend money on kit unless you really need to.

Also please be cautious when seeking advice, especially from people that may not have been to Thailand. Advice gleaned from other parties may be inaccurate for the season and the type of expedition that you are going to undertake. The attached list is your official expedition equipment list and should be strictly adhered to. If you are in any doubt then please contact either World Challenge or Cotswold Outdoor. Below is some general advice on equipment requirements and their necessity on your expedition.

What to expect from the climate in Thailand and top tips for kit:

Throughout the year temperatures in Thailand rarely vary from between 20 and 35°C. It will be humid throughout the region when you travel, particularly in the southern lowlands. As you'll be visiting during monsoon season you should expect rain (at times heavy) during your expedition.

Rucksacks

These can vary enormously in price and specifications. When choosing a rucksack remember that, when loaded, an uncomfortable rucksack can give you a hard time and it can be very bad for your back so try on several models in the shop. We recommend that you put weight into the pack in store and take plenty of time to make sure that the pack is adjusted correctly to fit your back and is comfortable to carry.

When packing, remember that you will need to keep about 10 litres of space in your rucksack free to accommodate the group equipment which is provided by World Challenge. This includes medical kits, safety ropes, cookers, fuel bottles, tents or hammocks.

Remember most rucksacks are not waterproof so it is essential you always line your rucksack with a **waterproof rucksack liner**, but avoid kitchen disposal bin bags as these are too flimsy and they won't last the duration of your expedition. A variety of more resistant bags, ranging from sturdy rubble sack style liners to sophisticated waterproof bags, are available from most outdoor and many DIY shops. It is vital that you have a 100% effective means of waterproofing your kit when operating in jungle environments, so where possible it is recommended that you invest a little extra in a sturdy 'Ortlieb' style drybag.

Rucksacks in Thailand

You may be doing a mixture of day treks and overnight treks during your expedition. Daysacks may be required for the day treks and to carry your essentials whilst travelling from one phase to another. Main treks in Thailand are unsupported so a well fitting rucksack is essential.

Sleeping bags

Sleeping well is an extremely important part of your expedition. There are two types of filling used in sleeping bags: down (i.e. feathers) and synthetic. Down bags are usually warmer and easier to handle for their weight and pack size but offer little insulation if wet. Synthetic bags remain warm when wet but will be heavier and bulkier than down bags. All sleeping bags are rated by season and as a general rule:

- 2 season bag - suitable down to a temperature of + 5 °C
- 3 season bag - suitable down to a temperature of - 5 °C
- 4 season bag - suitable down to a temperature of -10 °C

All ratings are only a guideline, if you know that you feel the cold when sleeping it may be advisable to use a warmer bag than recommended.

Recommendation for Thailand

A 1-2 season sleeping bag (comfortable to +5°C/ 0°C) would be most suitable depending upon how much you feel the cold. A synthetic bag will still offer you some warmth if you get wet, and these types of sleeping bag generally dry more quickly and easily than a down bag. As you will only need a 1-2 season sleeping bag the extra bulkiness shouldn't be too much of an issue.

Sleeping bag liners

Designed to help keep your sleeping bag clean and add a couple of extra degree's warmth, *silk* or *cotton liners* pack down small and can be washed easily. A single duvet cover, although slightly bulkier, can make a good less expensive alternative. *Fleece liners* are bulkier but upgrade a sleeping bag by one season. Sleeping bag liners are very useful if you expect to experience different weather and climatic conditions on expedition as they provide some versatility. They are also useful when staying at budget hotels/hostels where you may prefer to use your own linen.

Recommendation for Thailand

A silk or cotton sleeping bag liner will be useful for use in hostels during your time in country, and will add an extra layer of insulation if you feel cold at night whilst on your trek.

Sleeping mats

When you sleep directly on the ground in your sleeping bag, you lose body heat. Sleeping mats are designed to insulate you from the ground and can make a difference of around 2 - 4°C to the warmth of your sleeping bag. There are basically two types of sleeping mats: foam and inflatable mats. *Foam mats* are cheap and reliable, however it is important to have a good quality foam mat - the cheapest mats may not last the duration of the expedition and will provide very little protection. *Inflatable mats* are more comfortable and offer more insulation but are more expensive and could puncture, though repair kits are available. It is not necessary to purchase this for your expedition as long as you have a good quality foam mat, unless you feel you require the additional warmth.

Recommendation for Thailand

A sleeping mat will make your hammock more comfortable and warmer, but is not essential for your expedition.

Walking boots

There are two types of boots:

- **Leather Boots** - As a general rule of thumb these give slightly better support to your ankle and will last longer but do take longer to break in.
- **Fabric boots** - Are extremely popular and perform well in warm-weather destinations. They offer greater comfort and breathability and are perfectly suitable for your expedition.

Whichever type of boot you chose they **must** have:

- A rigid sole
- Good tread
- Good ankle-support.

It is advisable to purchase your boots well before your expedition and wear them for a few small treks to make sure they are comfortable and are fully broken in.

Recommendation for Thailand

Due to the hot, wet and humid climate of south-east Asia, breathable *fabric* boots would be more appropriate for your expedition. Military style 'jungle boots' (usually leather but with a fabric upper) are also a good option as they dry out extremely quickly and are also robust enough for use in the jungle.

Waterproofs (outer layer)

When you are out all day, good protection from the elements is essential for comfort and safety. Breathable fabrics are advisable but do not spend a lot of money on fabrics such as Gore-Tex unless you plan to use them on a regular basis after your expedition. Essential features of a jacket include an integral hood with stiffened peak and full storm flaps (covering zips and pockets) which are accessible when wearing a rucksack. Waterproof trousers and jackets should also have taped seams. The requirement for a good quality 'shell' that will give reliable protection from the wind and rain, as opposed to simpler light-weight waterproofs, will depend on the climate and altitude of the treks on your itinerary.

Recommendation for Thailand

It will rain during your time in south-east Asia so it is essential to take a waterproof top. Breathable fabrics are not recommended due to the humidity, which may clog some fabrics such as Gore-Tex and stop them working. A basic non-breathable waterproof will suffice for ensuring challengers keep dry in camp at night. Challengers should expect to be wet whilst trekking during the day! **Cheap plastic 'poncho' style waterproofs are neither recommended nor permitted when trekking on expedition.**

Fleece jackets

Fleece jackets vary enormously in price. The aim of a fleece jacket is to keep you warm as part of a layering system. The layering system works by trapping warm air between the layers, so baggy fitting layers are not effective. Fleeces 'wick' (expel) moisture away from the body and retain little water, but beware of cheap imitations as they will not wick efficiently and weigh more. The majority of fleeces are not windproof so they usually need an outer layer to cover them if it is cold and windy (i.e. your waterproof jacket and trousers). Micro fleeces are a lighter weight version of normal fleece layers and can add an additional layer of warmth.

Recommendation for Thailand

The temperature can drop overnight when you are in the uplands so it is advisable to take a light fleece with you on expedition if you are someone who feels the cold.

Base layers

As previously mentioned, warmth and comfort is attained by the layering system. Thermals are the first layer or base layer and should be close fitting to work effectively. Their aim is to wick moisture away from the skin and dry quickly. They are usually available in different weights and can be quite inexpensive but avoid those made from cotton as these do not have any wicking properties. Technical synthetic fabrics such as polyester or polypropylene are ideal. Cotton, however, may well be appropriate for hot climates although; once wet, cotton becomes cold and clammy and takes a long time to dry.

Recommendation for Thailand

It is advisable to take a base layer top for use in upland areas. This will also prove useful if you feel the cold overnight whilst trekking in the jungle.

Water bottles

Keeping fully hydrated is essential, you will drink far more water than normal whilst trekking. Whilst on expedition you must carry at least two 1L water bottles, one to purify your water in, and one to drink from. Additional water storage may be required for some destinations.

Recommendation for Thailand

Due to the humidity and nature of the treks in Thailand you will need additional storage for water. It is advised that you are able to carry 2-3L of water on you at all times. Where possible it is recommended you carry perhaps a 1-2L water bottle (make sure these are hard plastic rather than disposable) and a 1-2L 'Platypus' or similar hydration system. Having two separate places to store water will allow you to be purifying and drinking water at the same time, whilst using a 'Platypus' style hydration system will make your water more accessible and encourage you to keep hydrated.

Walking poles

These are particularly useful for longer treks (5 days plus) or high mountain treks. Research shows that the use of two walking poles can reduce the strain on the back, leg-joints, ankles and knees by up to 60% especially on down hill stretches when carrying rucksacks. If purchasing walking poles please note that cost does not necessarily represent extra quality, and two is better than one, but one is better than none at all!

Recommendation for Thailand

Walking poles are useful on jungle treks as it can be slippery underfoot. If you do not have walking poles, sometimes the guides will cut a stick or bamboo pole for you to use for support and balance.

Money belt

These are designed to be worn on the waist under your clothing for maximum security. Ideally the money belt pouch should be large enough to hold your passport and keep your cash unfolded.

Recommendation for Thailand

A money belt is highly recommended for your expedition.

Mosquito nets

Due to the risk of insect borne diseases throughout south-east Asia you may need a mosquito net. Nets may be required for your project phase (if you are going to be sleeping in a classroom for example) and for any time you spend 'sleeping under the stars' (i.e. without tents). For any nights that you are camping in tents you will not need a mosquito net as the tent doors and windows are screened with mesh.

Recommendation for Thailand

You will need to take a mosquito net with you for use with your hammock if you use it whilst on trek. It may also be required in some of the hostels/project sites throughout your expedition.

You will need a **single size hanging net**. Either a box shaped net or a wedge or pyramid-shaped net, both are suitable.

- **Box-shaped nets** - very spacious but need two or four points to hang from. Also bulkier and heavier than wedge/pyramid-shaped nets
- **Wedge/pyramid-shaped nets** - only need one hanging point and are lighter than box-shaped net, but are not so spacious.

Do **not** take a free-standing net or bell or hoop nets as they are not suitable and are more bulky to carry.

Individual kit list for Thailand

Base Layer	
2	T-shirts
2 pairs	Heavy duty walking socks
2 pairs	Thin liner socks
3 pairs	Underwear
1	Thermal top
Warmth Layer / Trekwear	
2 pairs	Comfortable, strong, quick-drying trousers
1 pair	Comfortable cotton shorts or equivalent
2	Long-sleeved shirts or equivalent
1	Light fleece top
1	Wool or fleece hat (optional)
Protective layer	
1	Wide-brimmed sunhat (not baseball cap)
1	Good quality waterproof jacket with hood
1 pair	Gaiters (optional; note that Gaiters will not prevent leeches on the lower legs)
Misc	
1	Bathing costume (single piece recommended over bikini-style for girls)
Footwear	
1	Walking boots with good ankle support and semi-rigid sole
1	Sandals with ankle strap or old trainers
1 pair	Trouser twists (costs approx 1GBP from Army surplus/outdoor stores)
Equipment	
1	Large rucksack (65 litre)
1	Daysack 20-30 litres. To be packed in main bag whilst trekking
1	Rucksack liner to waterproof your kit
1	Sleeping bag (1-2 season) and compression sack
1	Sleeping bag liner
1	Sleeping mat (foam or inflatable)
1	Head torch
2	Water bottles (at least 1L) or equivalent hydration system
1 pair	Sunglasses (good quality, UV A and B reflective)
1	Towel (not beach towel, but lightweight travel towel)
1	Whistle
1 set	Fork, spoon, mug and plate/bowl (bowl is generally more practical)
1	Mosquito net
Optional	
1	Bandana
1 set	Playing cards
1	Paperback book
1 or 2	Collapsible walking poles
Health and hygiene	
1	Washing / shaving kit
1 roll	Toilet paper
1	Packet of wet wipes
1-2 bottles	Antibacterial Gel
1	Insect repellent (formulas with DEET tend to be the most effective)
1	Sunblock/ high factor suncream
1	Tube of lip sunblock / lip salve
1-2 Small Bottles	Biodegradable soap
Sufficient	Sanitary products (females)

1	Athlete's foot talcum powder
Sufficient	Personal medication
1	Personal first aid kit to include antiseptic cream/wipes, assorted plasters, blister kit, Antihistamine for allergies (not Triludan), 10 x re-hydration sachets i.e. Dioralyte, painkillers i.e. paracetamol
Ancillaries	
1	Notebook / journal and pen
1	Small penknife
1 pair	Gardening/work gloves for the project phase
1	Money belt
1	Cheap waterproof watch
1	Set of resealable plastic bags for waterproofing kit
15m	Strong synthetic cord (paracord)
Group items (per 3-4 people or 'tent' group)	
1	Travel sewing kit
1	Spare boot laces
1	Roll of thick waterproof plastic tape (Gaffa Tape)
1	Box of waterproof matches / lighter
1	Guide book
Documentation	
1	Passport (must be valid for at least 6 months after your return date)
1	Visa (if applicable)
2	Copies of passport (photo page) – take these to build up day
2	Passport photos – take these to build up day
2	Copies of Visa from Passport (if applicable)
	Ensure that you complete your personal contact details online (on the expedition members' website) at least 4 weeks prior to your departure

Please note you are advised to travel to your destination in clothes from this kit list so as to avoid taking unnecessary items on expedition with you. They will only weigh you down!

Cost versus quality

Do not feel that you have to buy the most expensive equipment and do try to borrow as much as you can. If you are unable to borrow the equipment, Cotswold Outdoor provides an exclusive service offering Challengers, School Leaders and Expedition Leaders advice and discounted prices on clothing and equipment suitable for your specific expedition. You can either use their efficient mail order service (Tel: +44 (0) 844 557 7755), visit their website (www.cotswoldoutdoor.com) or visit a Cotswold Outdoor shop personally for equipment advice. Don't forget to use your World Challenge discount card. If you haven't received yours or if you have lost it you can print another copy from the Discounts page on My World Challenge.

If you intend to get a lot of use from your equipment prior to or after the expedition, then you may feel that you would prefer to buy leading brand items. These will probably last for longer, particularly if you envisage continuing your interest in the outdoors after the expedition. Manufacturers sometimes even offer lifetime guarantees on equipment such as rucksacks and waterproofs.

If you have any questions about your kit please contact our Customer Advisors on +44(0)1494 427 600 or email welcome@world-challenge.co.uk.