



Child's Dream Foundation

A charity organisation supporting children in need

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Unprivileged Children Have Dreams too...

Do's and Dont's in Thailand

Thais are quite tolerant of most kind of behaviour as long as it does not insult the two sacred topics of "monarchy" and "religion".

King and Country

- ✓ Thais have a deep, traditional reverence for the Royal Family. Every visitor should be careful to show respect for the King, the Queen and the Royal Children. Criticising the government, even Thai culture, is 'OK' but it is considered a great insult to nationhood as well as to the monarchy not to stand up and be quiet when you hear the royal or national anthem (played daily/publicly at 08:00am and 6:00pm). When attending a public event where a member of the Royal Family is present, the best guide on how to behave is to watch the crowd.

Religion

- ✓ Correct behaviour in temples entails several considerations. The most important is to dress neatly (long trousers, no sleeveless shirts) and to take your shoes off when you enter any building that contains a Buddha image or object.
- ✓ When sitting down keep your feet pointing away from any Buddha images
- ✓ Monks are not supposed to touch or be touched by women
- ✓ Some larger temples charge entrance fees. In other temples a (small) donation is appropriate.

Social gestures and attitudes

- ✓ Thais greet each other with a prayer-like gesture by putting the palms of their hands together. This gesture is known as a *wai*. The person who is junior in age or status is the first one to offer the *wai*. The senior person returns the *wai* generally with their hands raised to somewhere around their chest. If there is a great social distance between two people the *wai* will not be returned.
- ✓ Losing your temper means a loss of face for everyone present. Talking loudly is perceived as rude. Keeping your cool in all situations is the paramount rule.
- ✓ It is considered impolite to refuse an invitation (be it for a meal or a short visit).
- ✓ Public displays of affection between men and women are frowned upon, even though some more 'modern' young Thai are frequently seen holding hands these days.

Feet and head

- ✓ The feet are the lowest part of the body, spiritually as well as physically, so do not point them at people or at things. Don't prop your feet up on chairs or tables and never step over someone.
- ✓ Likewise, the head is the highest part of the body. Never touch Thais on the head. This rule is not as unambiguous as all that; you will see Thai touching each others head. The social context plays an important role here. In order not to make mistakes it is best to stick to the simple rule of not touching the head.

Dress

- ✓ Shorts (except knee length walking shorts), sleeveless shirts, tank tops and other beach attire are not considered appropriate dress for anything other than sports or the beach. You will see quite a few young Thais diverge from this dress code. Remember that they are not the mainstream Thai. Dressing neatly at all times shows your respect for Thai culture.
- ✓ Sandals or slip-on shoes are ok for almost any but the most formal occasions.
- ✓ Topless bathing is highly inappropriate in Thailand.

Shoes

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- ✓ Shoes are not worn inside people's homes, nor in some guesthouses and shops. If you see a pile of shoes at the entrance, you should respect the house custom.