AMBASSADORS' FACT SHEET PHUKET, THAILAND



Ambassadors' Fact Sheet: Phuket, Thailand



To help our students and graduates make a smooth transition to their new lives teaching English abroad, we've enlisted our <u>ITA Ambassadors</u> to provide us with insider facts and tips for making the most of life in major cities around the globe like Phuket.

Whether it's finding an English-speaking doctor, opening a bank account, or simply finding a supermarket where you can find the odd comfort food from home (peanut butter!), our ambassadors have actionable on-the-ground-tips to help you feel at home in your new home city. Please note that things change and we will do our best to keep these "Fact Sheets" updated over time and that current and future ambassadors will continue to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information possible.

Meet Our Phuket Ambassador



City	Phuket
Country	Thailand
Visa Type	Work Visa
North American Comfort Food Locations	Not only is Phuket the largest island in Thailand, it is also the second most visited location outside of Bangkok. In 2016, almost 10 million visitors came to Phuket, and when you combine those numbers with the large expat community already living on the island, comfort foods and other items such as toiletries and western-quality clothing can be found rather easily.
	Larger stores such as Tesco Lotus and Big C Supercenter offer many of the same food brands you can find back home, and both of these stores also sell clothing, familiar toiletries, and sporting equipment, as well as anything and everything you might need for your new kitchen. In addition to the stores mentioned above, there are a few MAKRO Cash & Carry stores on the island as well. These are very similar to COSTCO, however you don't need a membership to shop at MAKRO nor do you have to buy everything in bulk.
	Lastly, there are two huge shopping malls on Phuket, with a third opening some time in the Spring of 2018. There is Jungceylon in Patong, which is located on the west side of the island, and then there is Central Festival which is just outside of Phuket Town. Central Food Hall on the first floor of Central Festival carries many of the expat food brands, but because this market is located inside a shopping mall, prices tend to be more expensive than the stores listed previously.





Transportation	Taxi Phuket is a rather large island and many people who come here do not realize this beforehand. Unless you are independently wealthy, you need to have your own set of wheels if you plan on staying longer than a couple of weeks because the island is so large. The minimum fare in a metered taxi will set you back about 300 baht (\$9 USD), and unlike most things in Thailand, that is non-negotiable.
	Motorbike
	Most people, locals and expats alike, get around by motorbike or motorcycle. During the rainy season, many of the locals seem to prefer their cars over their motorbikes but when it's not raining, you see a significantly lower number of cars on the roads. When you first arrive on the island, you can rent a motorbike for less than 250 baht (\$7.50 USD) per day, but once you get settled in, you'll want to rent monthly (3,000 baht / \$88 USD) or buy a used motorbike like many teachers that come to the island do.
	Tuk Tuk
	There are a couple of other transportation options on the
	island and they include Phuket's version of the tuk tuk as well as the songthaew. The tuk tuk in Phuket is an open-air
	box-truck of sorts that can accommodate up to four or six
	passengers, depending on the size, and will take you
	exactly where you ask them to. Tuk tuk prices are cheaper than the taxis on the island, and prices are mostly
	standardized between destinations.

Songthaew The songthaews in Phuket are also open-air vehicles, adapted from a pick-up or larger truck, and are used as a shared taxi or public bus. Unlike taxis or tuk tuks on the island, songthaews follow a specific route from point A to point B, and you can hop on at designated "bus stops" and hop off virtually anywhere along the route. The cost to ride a songthaew varies depending on how far you are going, but they are much less expensive than both the taxi and tuk tuk because they are more of a public transportation option, and although reliable, they are much slower than other options.
 Bangkok Hospital Phuket For serious medical needs or if you just prefer the best of everything, the leading physicians and surgeons on the island can be found at Bangkok Hospital Phuket in Phuket Town. In addition to their western-educated staff who speak very good English, this state-of-the-art hospital and dental center also has a full range of health screening packages available. Bangkok Hospital Phuket caters mostly to foreigners and that's because the cost of this hospital would put m any local Thai's into serious debt. Bangkok Hospital Phuket does accept foreign health insurance plans, but be sure to always check first. Mission Hospital Phuket If you're looking for quality healthcare without the western prices of Bangkok Hospital Phuket, then Mission Hospital Phuket is the next best place. This is a private hospital located on the outskirts of Phuket Town, and I know from experience that the quality of care is very good, and services there are covered under the Thai national insurance program. Mission Hospital Phuket also recently opened a dental center which many foreign teachers speak highly of.

Hospitals & Doctors (English Speaking)	Vachira Phuket Hospital Brought to you by the Thai Ministry of Public Health, Vachira Phuket Hospital is a public hospital and is also located in Phuket Town. This hospital is popular among locals and also accepts the Thai national insurance program.
Beauty Supply Stores, Hairdressers & Barbers	With regards to beauty supplies, I'm fairly certain that women can find pretty much anything they might need at Tesco Lotus, Big C, or any of the shopping malls on the island. As for barbershops in Phuket Town, there are too many to list and my barber just moved back to the province he is from, so I am in search for a new barber myself! The going rate today for a men's haircut in Phuket Town is between 120-150 baht (\$3.50 - \$4.50 USD).
Bank Account Location	Working for a Thai government school, I was required to open a bank account at Government Savings Bank (aka "the pink bank") in Phuket Town. This allows the school to deposit my monthly salary directly into my account.



Restaurants	Some restaurants I enjoy frequenting are:
	1. <u>Happy Days</u> : Near Chalong Pier
	2. Sintee Café & Bar: Phuket Town
	3. The Pad Thai Shop: Karon Beach area
	4. Lemongrass Restaurant: Patong Beach
	5. <u>Pancake Corner</u> : Phuket Town
Hotspots	A few of my favorites include:
	 Phuketique Coffee Bar (Phuket Town): Good coffee but you'll have to wait until 10:30am for them to open!
	 CRAFTS & Co. (Phuket Town): This small bar and restaurant has a large selection of craft beers from across the globe, and attracts both the local and foreigner crowds. Last time I was there was on a Sunday night and it was pretty busy.
	 43 Guesthouse (Thalang Road, Phuket Town): Sunday's after 4pm are best as this sleepy guesthouse turns into a party to coincide with the Phuket Town Sunday Night Market which takes over Thalang Road every Sunday from 4pm - 10pm.
	 SE - WA - NA (Phuket Town): You'll never be disappointed buying a bottled beer here and having them pour it into an ice cold mug for you. This place is known as "Jelly Beers" among my friends in my circle, and there is live music after 8pm most nights.



Permanent Housing Resources	Permanent housing in Phuket is plentiful and whether you want to live in a Thai-style house without windows or air-conditioning, or you prefer a western-style condominium building with 24-hour security, fitness center, and pool, the island is very accommodating. When I arrived in Phuket, I simply asked my former classmate and <u>ITA Alumni</u> friend where she was living and how she found her rental unit. After hearing her advice, I simply drove around on my motorbike and stopped to look at places that were of interest to me. I found a nice rental condo unit very close to where I teach now.
Expat Community Resources	Phuket has one of the largest expat communities I have ever experienced so you need not worry about never seeing another foreigner on the island. Expats come in many shapes, sizes, colors, and flavors, and for starters, the school you end up teaching at should provide you with the opportunity to meet several of them. You will also have the opportunity to interact with expats just about everywhere you go on the island because they are literally everywhere, just like the local Thai people.

Additional Information	Being a newcomer to Phuket can be daunting for a number of reasons such as the immense size of the island, the island's rush hour traffic, or the sheer number of tourists who are there for a beach holiday. Just remember that most people on Phuket are there to enjoy themselves and have a good time, which in turn leads to residual fun for you as well!
	In addition to making new friends with a few of the teachers at your school, check out the following links for information about Phuket.
	 Beaches: With over 30 beaches on the island alone, picking one can be overwhelming, so check out this site to read more about them. Night Markets: Check out Phuket's night markets here. News: For news and information about Phuket, you can find it here.
	Facebook Groups:
	 <u>Clean The Beach Boot Camp</u>: Meet locals and expats, clean the environment, and get fit. <u>Phuket Teachers & Friends</u>: Looking for a new teaching position or something to do? Check this group out. <u>ITA Alumni Thailand</u>: See what's going on in Thailand and meet other ITA Alumni.
	Lastly, please do not hesitate to contact our ITA Alumni Ambassador in Phuket if you are considering moving to Phuket to teach and have any questions or concerns whatsoever!



Additional Resources:

- Teaching English in Thailand: Country Profile
- How Much Money Can You Learn & Save Teaching English in Thailand?
- <u>10 Reasons Why I Loved Teaching English in Thailand</u>
- Oh, The People You Will Meet Teaching English in Thailand
- <u>Thailand Alumni Facebook Group</u>: Only enrolled students & alumni may post, but anybody can check out the conversation between ITA grads teaching English in Thailand on a wide array of topics from job tips and apartment hunting to recreational activities & social meet-ups.