

# TEACH IN THAILAND | IN-COUNTRY NEWS | 1



## Sawasdee Krap/Kha!

Hey everyone!

The staff here at OEG had a great time meeting and getting to know all of you during orientation. We are so excited to finally have you here with us in Thailand! By now, you have gotten settled in your placements and have gotten the chance to explore the area that you will be living and working in. Some of you have even started teaching already. Hopefully you were able to take the tips from teacher training into your classroom with you.

Believe us when we say that even though all of you may now be in different areas of the country, the friends you have made in orientation will become your weekend travel buddies and support system during the remainder of your time in Thailand. Even though there is such a large group of participants this semester, and you probably don't know everyone in the program due to the splitting of the orientations, we want you to know that all 176 of you are great resources for each other and also awesome and capable individuals.

So keep in touch with people! Email, SMS, phone calls, Facebook, Skype- the possibilities are endless. Don't be afraid to reach out to someone if they were in a different orientation than you- chances are they are going through the same things you are and are pretty cool too. And remember, us here at OEG are always here to help.

## TEACHING RESOURCES

As Mike and Paul mentioned during orientation, there are multitudes of resources for you to find lesson plans. A quick Google search will give you all the ESL games, activities and lesson plans you could ever want, and of course you also have the teaching booklets from your orientation packets that are most likely worth looking through again.



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Participants usually find it is a good idea to trade ideas or lesson plans with each other. Already there has been some good dialogue on the Facebook group about this. If you haven't seen it already, there is an earlier post [here](#) with a ton of good ESL websites on it.

## DON'T LEAVE THE FAMILY OUT!



Don't forget to keep in touch with your friends and family back home. They are most likely very interested to know all the little details of what you are doing and what you have seen. However, from experience, we know that sometimes talking to people back home can be difficult. New experiences

sometimes do not fully translate across cultural differences. It may not be possible for you to fully explain, or for people back home to truly understand what it's like to stand in front of thousands at your school's morning assembly on your first day- Or to be able to convey the mix of anticipation, utter excitement and simultaneous exhaustion you felt during a week of teacher training, language lessons and elephant-riding. Still, your family and friends back home care about you and are interested in the new experiences you are having. Tell them what you can, and if they don't fully understand or appreciate the mysteries of squat toilets, spontaneous sign language conversations, or the black glob in that plate of street noodles, don't take offense. There are some things that can only be understood by experiencing them firsthand. Your friends here will be able to laugh along with you even if people back home can't.

## SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW AND THINK ABOUT.

**Avoiding fees for packages** – In the past (or in Jake's case, 2 weeks ago) some participants have gotten stuck having to pay high import taxes on packages being shipped to them from home. Formal information on these taxes is often vague, but typically Thai customs takes a percentage of the value of everything declared in the box and charges the person receiving the materials for them. Usually customs officials fear that you are receiving items to re-sell in Thailand. Therefore, it is a good idea to declare everything in the box as "Used," or to label the package "Gifts," "Education Materials" or "For Personal Use Only."



Also, it is recommended to ship via UPS or DHL, and not FedEx. Additionally, make sure you have your package's tracking number after it is sent.

**iTalk International Calling Cards**- Skype and emails are a great way to keep in touch with everyone back home, but for those of you having trouble getting internet it may be difficult to do this often. Luckily there is a calling card that you can buy either online or at a convenience store that will allow you to make International calls for about 1 baht per minute using your Thai SIM card. There are 2 ways to do it:



-You can call the iTalk number then put in your pin and dial the International number. This will charge .7 baht per minute to your iTalk account and the normal per-minute rate to your AIS 1-2 Call account (Thai SIM card)

-You can call a special iTalk number that will then hang up and call you back, at which point you dial your pin and then the international number. This will charge .25 baht in addition to the .7 baht on you iTalk account, but will charge nothing to your 1-2 Call account.

All of this information is on the [ThaiTelephone website](#) where you can buy the cards.

## WEATHER

When planning your traveling in the coming weeks and months, be sure do a little research or ask your coordinators or fellow teachers for travel and weather-preparation advice. Even though the rainy season has passed, and we are getting into the “cooler” months, the chance of rain, humidity and high temperatures are always overwhelming. This is not to discourage anyone from traveling, but it is definitely a good thing to keep in mind.

Check out the Thai Meteorological Department website. It is a good way to keep track of weather in all provinces. [www.tmd.go.th/en/](http://www.tmd.go.th/en/)

## REMEMBER TO REGISTER WITH YOUR EMBASSY!

OEG will keep you informed of relevant updates by email and text messages, but we recommend that you register with your country's embassy here in Thailand. If there is any type of emergency, registering will provide you with information and other critical assistance straight from the embassy. Links to the registration pages of various embassies are below-

United States- <http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/embassy/acsregform.htm>  
Canada- [https://www.voyage2.gc.ca/registration\\_inscription/olrportal-eng.aspx](https://www.voyage2.gc.ca/registration_inscription/olrportal-eng.aspx)  
Australia- <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>  
UK- <http://ukinthailand.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/how-we-can-help/#>

## TRAVEL SPOTLIGHT: AYUTTHAYA

Every newsletter will have a “Travel Spotlight” section sharing information on different places in Thailand you may want to travel to. This time, we will highlight Ayutthaya.

As you learned in orientation and may have read about, Ayutthaya was the second capital of the Kingdom of Siam. Today, it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ayutthaya is a small city situated 85 km (50 miles) north of Bangkok on the Chao Praya River. This destination is known for its display of ancient temples and large, majestic Buddha statues. Due to the war with the Burmese most of these statues are in ruins; however they still remain beautiful to this day.

### Getting There

By train: Trains regularly depart from Bangkok's Hualamphong Train Station and stops in Ayutthaya. The trip takes about 2-2.5 hours.

By Bus from Bangkok: Buses operate every 20-30 minutes from Bangkok's Northern Bus Terminal (Mo Chit) to Ayutthaya. First-class, air conditioned buses charge about 50 baht. The trip can take anywhere from 1.5-2 hours depending on traffic going out of the city.



Regional buses and vans: Some neighboring provinces also have vans that go directly to Ayutthaya. If you are living outside of Bangkok, you should ask your coordinator if there is a local way to get to Ayutthaya. Likely it will be cheaper and quicker than going through Bangkok.

### Getting Around

Song Taews, tuk tusk and taxis are available and are easy ways to get around the city. However, there are many hostels and shops that rent bicycles on an hourly or daily basis for around 30 baht/day. This is a fun way to explore the many temples.

### Don't Miss

Wat Phra Si Sanphet  
Viharn Phra Mongkol Bopi  
Wat Phra Mahathat  
Ayutthaya Historical Study Center

### Eat

Roti Saimai- This regional delicacy from Ayutthaya is a Thai-style candy floss wrapped in roti. It's kind of like cotton candy wrapped in a soft tortilla. You may have seen Fiat munching on one during Orientation!



### Tips

Some of the temples have entrance fees while others are free. At most of the temples (because they are ruins) a strict dress code isn't enforced. However, it is best to remain respectful when walking around the ruins and statues. Especially be aware to not point your feet or climb the statues. Also, some past participants have found it useful to hire a guide for the day. Look around for a few guides before finding the best price.

Already a group of OEG teachers have been to Ayutthaya. You can contact Jacob Waxman or Kayce Sebree for any questions you might have. You can also check out Kayce's blog post about their trip here: <https://kayce-esque.jux.com/618165>

### References:

<http://wikitravel.org/en/Ayutthaya>

Lonely Planet pg 195-204

We had a great time getting to know you at orientation. We wish you all the best at your placements and schools. Please don't hesitate to ask us any questions or lets us know any concerns. We're here for you!

Stay safe, and have fun!

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