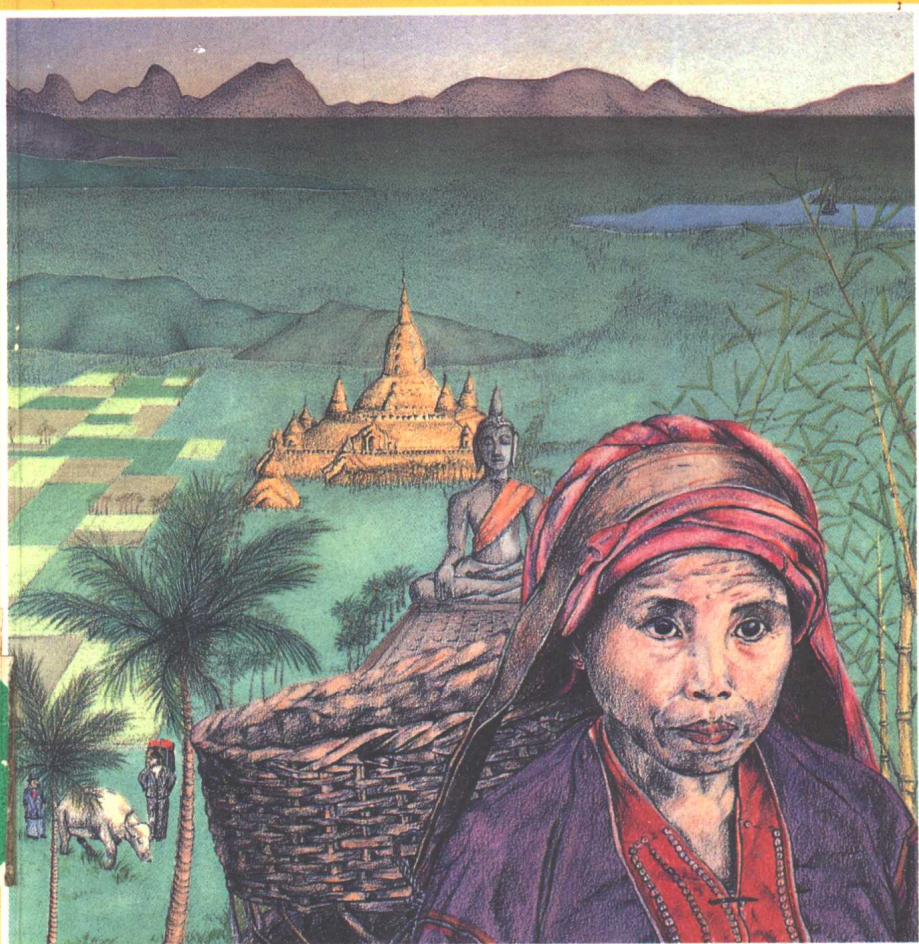


South-East Asia

on a shoestring



lonely planet

Tony Wheeler

0116686

South-East Asia on a shoestring

Tony Wheeler

24.408073

W566

677p 22c

A GIFT OF
THE ASIA FOUNDATION
DISTRIBUTED BY

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

美國亞洲基金會贈書
上海外國語學院圖書館

NO FOR SALE



4990116686



福州大學圖
書館藏書印

for the purpose of review, without the written permission of the publisher and copyright owner.

South-East Asia on a Shoestring
6th edition

Published by

Lonely Planet Publications

Head Office: PO Box 617, Hawthorn, Victoria 3122, Australia

US Office: PO Box 2001A, Berkeley, CA 94702, USA

Printed by

Singapore National Printers Ltd, Singapore

Cover illustration by

Joanne Ryan

First published

1975

This Edition

February 1989

Although the author and publisher have tried to make the information as accurate as possible, they accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person using this book.

National Library of Australia Cataloguing in Publication Data

Wheeler, Tony

South-East Asia on a Shoestring

6th ed.

Includes index.

ISBN 0 86442 056 0.

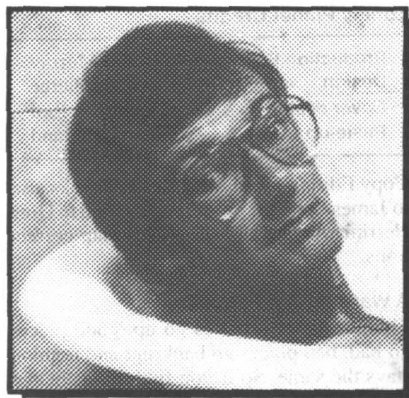
1. Asia, Southeastern – Description and Travel – Guide-books. I. Title.

915.9'0453

© Tony Wheeler 1989

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, without the written permission of the publisher and copyright owner.

Tony Wheeler was born in England but spent most of his younger days overseas due to his father's occupation with British Airways. Those years included a lengthy spell in Pakistan, a shorter period in the West Indies and all his high school years in the US. He returned to England to do a university degree in engineering, worked for a short time as an automotive design engineer, returned to university again and did an MBA then dropped out on the Asian overland trail with his wife Maureen. They've been travelling, writing and publishing guidebooks ever since, having set up Lonely Planet Publications in the mid-70s. Travelling for Tony and Maureen is now considerably enlivened by their children Tashi and Kieran, both of whom came along for part of the updating travel for the new edition of this book.



This Edition

It was way back in 1974 when Maureen and I started off on our first long trek around South-East Asia to produce the original edition of *South-East Asia on a Shoestring*. Along the way from that first 144 page edition to this much larger 6th edition it has gone through many changes but always kept that familiar yellow cover!

Although it's physically impossible for me to get back to every single place in this book I always get back to some of them and there is always some place which I cover again in great depth. Equally important, Lonely Planet now has a string of regular researchers whose work I can trust and between us we do the most thorough and comprehensive updating job possible.

For this edition we once again drew on the detailed research for our individual travel survival kit guides. In particular Sue Tan, editor of Lonely Planet's *Update*, worked her way down the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia and then tackled the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak together with Brunei Darussalam. Meanwhile Joe Cummings, author of our Thailand survival kit, tackled the west coast of the Malay peninsula together with

Singapore. Joe also rewrote the Thailand and Burma sections of this edition. Papua New Guinea was tackled by Richard Everist.

Since the last edition of this book one encouraging change in the region has been the increased accessibility of the 'other South-East Asia' - Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. With this edition we've expanded our coverage of those countries and once again thanks must go to Paul Cummings of Orbitours in Sydney for his rewrite of this section. Additionally this time round we've had some letters from visitors to the region including the intrepid Paul Greening who managed to visit Vietnam independently by a method I will not disclose!

Finally I made two circuits of the region. First I went to the Philippines and followed it up with visits to Hong Kong and Macau. In the second circuit I tackled Indonesia, accompanied in Bali and Java by Maureen and our increasingly well travelled children Tashi and Kieran. My travels through Sumatra were the most extensive since our original trip there for the very first edition of this book. I completed this second circuit of the region with flying visits to Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

Lonely Planet Credits

Production Editor	Jon Murray
Design	Todd Pierce
Cover design	Valerie Tellini
Paste-up	Glenn Beanland

Copy Editing by Andrew Kelly. Thanks also to James Lyon for proof reading, and to Greg Herriman and Ralph Roob for map corrections.

A Warning & a Request

Things change – prices go up, good places go bad, bad places go bankrupt and nothing stays the same. So if you find things better,

worse, cheaper, more expensive, recently opened or long ago closed please don't blame me but please do write and tell me. The letters we get from 'our' travellers out there on the road are some of the nicest things about doing these guides for a living. The names of the many people who wrote to us with information on South-East Asia are at the end of the book. Thanks! As usual the best letters will be rewarded with a free copy of the next edition (or any other LP guide if you prefer) (and your information is good enough!).

Dedication

To my brother Patrick and Maureen's sister Lynne, life's travels ended for them in 1988.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	7
FACTS ABOUT THE REGION Documents - Visas - Money - When & How Long - Health - Accommodation - Food - People - Theft - Dope - What to Take & How to Take it - Appearance & Conduct - Film & Camera - Mail - Buying & Selling - Final Thoughts	8
GETTING THERE From the UK - From Australia - From North America	22
GETTING AROUND Flying Around Asia - Overland in South-East Asia - Transport - Student Travel - Yachts	24
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM Facts about the Country - Facts for the Visitor - Getting There & Away - Bandar Seri Begawan	29
BURMA Facts about the Country - Facts for the Visitor - Getting There & Away - Getting Around - Rangoon - Pegu - Mandalay - Pagan - Inle Lake - Kalaw & Pindaya	36
HONG KONG Facts about the Country - Facts for the Visitor - Getting There & Away - Getting Around - Kowloon - Hong Kong Central - Hong Kong Island - New Territories - The Islands	66
INDONESIA Facts about the Country - Facts for the Visitor - Getting There & Away - Getting Around	95
Java - Jakarta - Merak - Banten - Bogor - Pelabuhanratu - Bandung - Garut - Tasik & Cipatujah - Pangandaran - Cirebon - Yogyakarta - Wonosobo - Dieng Plateau - Solo - Semarang - Malang - Surabaya - Madura - Mt Bromo	
Bali - Kuta & Legian - Sanur - Benoa & the South - Denpasar - Ubud - East Bali - Padangbai - Balina Beach - Tenganan - Candidasa - Amlapura - Tirtagangga - Bangli - Besakih - West Bali - Penelokan - Batur & Kintamani - Lake Batur & Mt Batur - Bendugal - Singaraja	168
Sumatra - Riau Archipelago - Tanjung Pinang - Other Riau Islands - Panjung - Palembang - Jambi - Bengkulu - Kerinci - Padang - Siberut Island - Bukittinggi - Pekanbaru - Sibolga - Nias - Prapat - Lake Toba - Brastagi - Siantar - Binjai - Bukit Lawang - Medan - Banda Aceh	207
Nusa Tenggara - Lombok - Ampenam-Mataram-Cakranegara - Senggigi Beach - Narmada - Lingsar - Suranadi - Lembar - Sukarara - Rembitan - Kuta Beach - Kotaraja - Labuhan Lombok - Gili Islands - Mt Rinjani - Sumbawa - Labuhan Alas - Sumbawa Besar - Bima-Raba - Sape - Komodo - Flores - Labuhanbajo - Ruteng - Reo - Bajawa - Ende - Keli Mutu - Mone - Wolowaru - Wolonjita, Jopu & Nggela - Maumere - Lantaka - Lembata - Lewoleba - Lamalera - Sumba - Waingapu - Waikabubak - Timor - Kupang - Soe - Kefamenanu - Atambua & Atapupa - Dili - Baucau	251
Kalimantan - Pontianak - Tarakan - Samarinda - Tenggarong - Balikpapan - Banjarmasin - Martapura - Banjarbaru - Cempaka	291
Sulawesi - Ujung Pandang - Pare Pare - Tanatoraja - Rantepao - Makale - Pendolo - Tentena - Poso - Palu - Donggala - Minahasa - Mandado - Bitung - Gorontalo	302
Moluccas - Ambon - Banda Islands - Bandaneira - Ternate - Tidore	322
Irian Jaya - Jayapura - Baliem Valley - Wamena - Biak	331
MACAU Facts about the Country - Facts for the Visitor - Getting There & Away - Getting Around - Around the Country	342
MALAYSIA Facts about the Country - Facts for the Visitor - Getting There & Away - Getting Around	352
Peninsular Malaysia - Melaka - Port Dickson - Kuala Lumpur - Genting Highlands - Fraser's Hill - Cameron Highlands - Ipoh - Pangkor Island - Kuala Kangsar - Taiping - Penang - Alor Setar - Kuala Perlis - Langkawi - Mersing - Tioman - Other Islands - Kuantan - Cherating - Rantau Abang - Marang	359
Sarawak - Kuching - Sibul - Kapit - Bintulu - Miri - Niah Caves	410
Sabah - Kota Kinabalu - Beaufort - Tenom - Keningau - Kota Belud - Mt Kinabalu - Ranau - Sandakan - Lahad Datu - Tawau	425

PAPUA NEW GUINEA Facts about the Country – Facts for the Visitor – Getting There & Away – Getting Around	439
PHILIPPINES Facts about the Country – Facts for the Visitor – Getting There & Away – Getting Around	473
Manila	484
Around Manila – Corregidor – Olongapo – Angeles City – Pagsanjan – Tagaytay – San Pablo – Batangas – Lucena City	498
North Luzon Hundred Islands – Dagupan – Buang & San Fernando – Baguio – Mountain Provinces – Bontoc – Sagada – Banaue – Ilocos Province – Vigan	503
South Luzon – Naga – San Miguel Bay – Iriga & Lake Buli – Mayon – Legaspi – Tiwi – Catanduanes – Sorsogon – Matnog	510
Other Islands – Bohol – Tagbilaran – Chocolate Hills – Camiguin – Mambajao – Cebu – Cebu City – Mactan Island – Toledo Moalboal – Leyte – Tacloban – Ormoc – Marinduque – Boac – Masbate – Mindanao – Surigao – Butuan – Ballingoan – Cagayan de Oro – Iligan – Dapitan – Zamboanga – Davao – Sulu Archipelago – Mindoro – Puerto Galera – Negros – Bacolod – Dumaguete – Palawan – Puerto Princesa – Panay – Iloilo – Roxas – Kalibo – Boracay – Romblon – Samar – Allen – Catarman – Calbayog – Catbalogan	514
SINGAPORE Facts about the Country – Facts for the Visitor – Getting There & Away – Getting Around – Around the Country	544
THAILAND Facts about the Country – Facts for the Visitor – Getting There & Away – Getting Around	566
Bangkok	574
Around Bangkok – Ayuthaya – Bang Pa In – Lopburi – Saraburi – Ang Thong – Suphanburi – Nakhon Pathom – Kanchanaburi – Koh Si Chang – Pattaya – Rayong – Koh Samet	594
Northern Thailand – Chiang Mai – Nakhon Sawan – Kamphaeng Phet – Phitsanuloke – Sukhothai – Tak – Mae Sot – Lampang – Doi Inthanon – Mae Hong Son – Pai – Fang – Chiang Rai – Chiang Khong – Chiang Saen – Mae Sai-Mae Salong Area – Nan	604
North-East Thailand – Nakhon Ratchasima (Khorat) – Khon Kaen – Udon Thani – Nong Khai – Lom Sak – Loei – Chiang Khan – Beung Kan – Nakhon Phanom – That Phanom – Yasothorn – Ubon (Ubol) – Ratchathani – Surin	625
Southern Thailand – Ratchaburi – Phetburi (Petchaburi) – Hua Hin – Prachuap Khiri Khan – Ranong – Chaiya – Surat Thani – Koh Samui – Kho Phangan – Nakhon Si Thammarat – Phattalung – Songkhla – Hat Yai – Satun – Phuket – Phangnga – Krabi – Koh Phi Phi – Trang – Khao Sak National Park – Sungai Golok	631
THE OTHER SOUTH-EAST ASIA – Vietnam – Laos – Kampuchea	653
INDEX Map Index	666

Introduction

If I had to nominate one region of the world as my favourite for travelling, the one area I'd choose if I had to quit travelling everywhere else, I would have no second thoughts – South-East Asia. There is simply more variety here than almost any other region of the world. In food, religion, culture, South-East Asia has everything you could possibly ask for.

What's more, it's a great area for travel simply for the sake of travel. Sure the big international airlines cruise high overhead on their way to Singapore, Bangkok or Hong Kong, but you've not really experienced flying until you've been into a few of Papua New Guinea's 'third level' airstrips. When you get to the end of the runway you're either flying or falling, there's no third choice. If island hopping sounds like fun then you can't beat South-East Asia for opportunities in that field. The Philippines, for example, claim to have over 7000 islands and there are countless ships ploughing back and forth between them. In lots of places you can make island hopping even more adventurous. I'll always remember the time six of us chartered an Indonesian *prahu* to sail from Flores to Sumbawa via the island of Komodo to see the famous dragons – and spent four solid days pumping the bilge to keep that leaky bucket afloat.

Food is another great pleasure of South-East Asia. After my first long trip through the region I became completely addicted to tropical fruit and thoughts of rambutans, mangosteens and salaks still make me

glassy-eyed! But I must admit I'm still working on developing a taste for durians though. Singapore just has to be one of the world's food capitals; every time I fly there I seem to spend the last half-hour of the flight thinking over where I'm going to eat each and every meal for the next few days.

Of course travelling and eating are not all there are to exploring a region, but if you want memorable scenes and unforgettable moments you'll certainly find those. The great Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon is still one of those 'magical' places where time seems to stand still and each visit reveals something new. Early mornings in Bali have a pastoral beauty words and even pictures simply cannot capture. Or in Hong Kong you can feel yourself at the cutting edge of world events and high technology, and experience that strange sensation of money actually being created all around you!

South-East Asia also has a healthy share of the world's most interesting volcanoes. Over the years I've stood on top of Mayon in the Philippines, the world's 'most perfect' volcano; gazed down on the three different-coloured crater-lakes of Keli Mutu in Flores, and watched the sun rise from the crater rim of Bromo in Java. Even if simply lying on beaches is more your thing, South-East Asia has plenty to offer. You can spend a lot of time wrestling with momentous decisions about whether Tioman, Phuket or Koh Samui is the most beautiful tropical island. In fact the more I think about it the more enthusiastic I am to go back again!

Facts about the Region

DOCUMENTS

There are two documents you have to have and a number worth considering. You must have a passport and health certificate. Make sure your passport is valid for a reasonably long period of time as in many countries it is required that your passport has at least six months validity left, even if you're only staying for a few days. Make sure it has plenty of space left for those rubber-stamp-happy Asians to do their bit, too. It could be embarrassing to run out of blank pages, although in my experience it is generally fairly easy to get a new passport in Asia (I've had one in Jakarta, Maureen had one in Bangkok) so long as you haven't lost the old one. Some people (Americans for example) can simply have an extra concertina-section stuck in when their passport gets filled up. The second 'necessary' document is an International Health Certificate – see the Health Preparations section for more details.

If you plan to be driving while abroad get an International Driving Permit from your local automobile association. Usual cost is around US\$5. They are valid for one year only and make life much simpler, especially for hiring motorcycles in Bali. An International Youth Hostel card can be useful even if you don't intend to use hostels. Although many Asian hostels do not require that you be a YHA member, they will often charge you less if you have a card.

Then there are student cards. The ISIC, International Student Identity Card, is a green and white card with your photograph on it, usually supplied in a clear plastic pouch. It can perform all sorts of wonders, particularly when it comes to airline tickets – so it's no wonder that there is a worldwide industry in fake student cards. The usual price for a fake card is around US\$7.50 and Bangkok is a great centre for finding them – notices appear in all the relevant places! Of

course some of the cards are of deplorably low quality, but airlines simply want to get you into their aircraft, even if it is with a student discount, they're not too worried about how pretty the card is. Many places now also stipulate a maximum age for student discounts or, more simply, they've substituted a 'youth discount' for a 'student discount'.

Finally remember that 'student' is a very respectable thing to be and if your passport has a blank space for occupation you are much better off having 'student' there than something nasty like 'journalist' or 'photographer'.

Losing your passport is a real bummer, it can be made a little easier if somewhere else you've got a record of its number and issue date or, even better, photocopies of the relevant data pages. A photocopy of your birth certificate can be useful too. While you're compiling that info add the serial number of your travellers' cheques and US\$50 or so as emergency cash – keep all that material totally separate from your passport, cheques and other cash.

VISAS

Visas remain my pet Asian hate. Visas are a stamp in your passport permitting you to enter the country in question and stay for a specified period of time. They're generally pure red tape and another means of gouging a few more dollars out of you. If you spend much time travelling around the region you'll waste a lot of time, money, effort and passport pages on them although I'm pleased to say over the years the visa situation in South-East Asia has (Burma apart) become much better.

Several steps can make visas a little easier. As far as possible get your visas as you go along rather than all at once before you leave home. Two reasons – one, they often expire after x days, and two, it is often easier and very often cheaper to get them in neighbouring countries than far away. Shop around for your visas, you'll hear on the

grapevine that city A is far better than city B for such and such a visa.

Finally there is the dreaded ticket-out problem. For some reason several countries have a phobia that if you don't arrive clutching your departure ticket in your hand you'll never leave. This is a real hassle if you intend to depart by some unusual means for which the tickets can only be bought after you arrive!

There are two possible answers. One is to get a 'miscellaneous charges order' (mco), which is like an airline ticket but with no destination. Some places will accept this. Alternatively just get the cheapest ticket out and get a refund for it later on – make sure it's the cheapest and safest; there are some airlines who part with refunds like Scrooge with his pennies.

Of course if you have a ticket and really are going to be departing as planned you've got no problems. Note that in places where renewing visas can be difficult a confirmed ticket out from the place you're trying to renew in will help. If you're in Bali a confirmed ticket out of Denpasar will stand you in much better stead than an undated one from Medan in north Sumatra.

If you hit a sticky visa problem, shop around. In some other city or country the situation may be better. See the section on visas under the individual countries in this book. And remember the most important rule: treat visits to embassies, consulates and borders as formal occasions – dress up for them.

MONEY

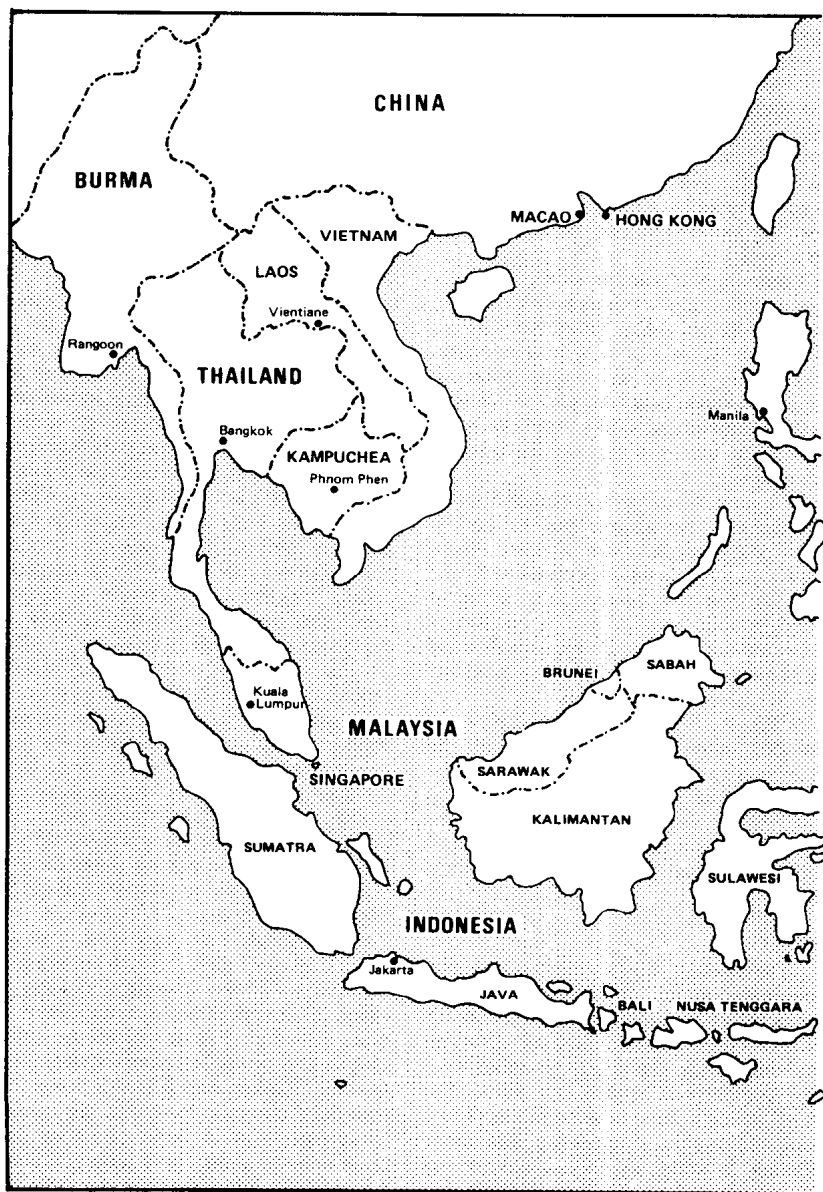
Bring as much of this fine stuff as possible. Despite the ups and downs of international currencies you will still generally find US dollars are the most easily exchanged but you may well decide that other currencies have better prospects of holding their value. The pound is nice to have in some places (Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and most definitely in India), the Deutsche mark and the yen are well accepted everywhere, but when it comes down to day-in-day-out

acceptability the dollar is the currency to carry. It's particularly good in the Philippines and Thailand (where US influence is/has been strong) and in Indonesia where the US dollar often seems to enjoy a strange premium over the other currencies.

American Express or Thomas Cook travellers' cheques are probably the best to carry because of their 'instant replacement' policies. The main idea of carrying cheques rather than cash is the protection they offer from theft, but it doesn't do a lot of good if you have to go back home first to get the refund. Amex have offices in many major cities but remember that 'instant replacement' may not always be instantaneous, although overall most people seem to be pretty satisfied with the service. Keeping a record of the cheque numbers and the initial purchase details is vitally important. Without this you may well find that 'instant' is a very long time indeed. If you're going to really out-of-the-way places, it may be worth taking a couple of different brands of travellers' cheques since banks may not always accept all varieties.

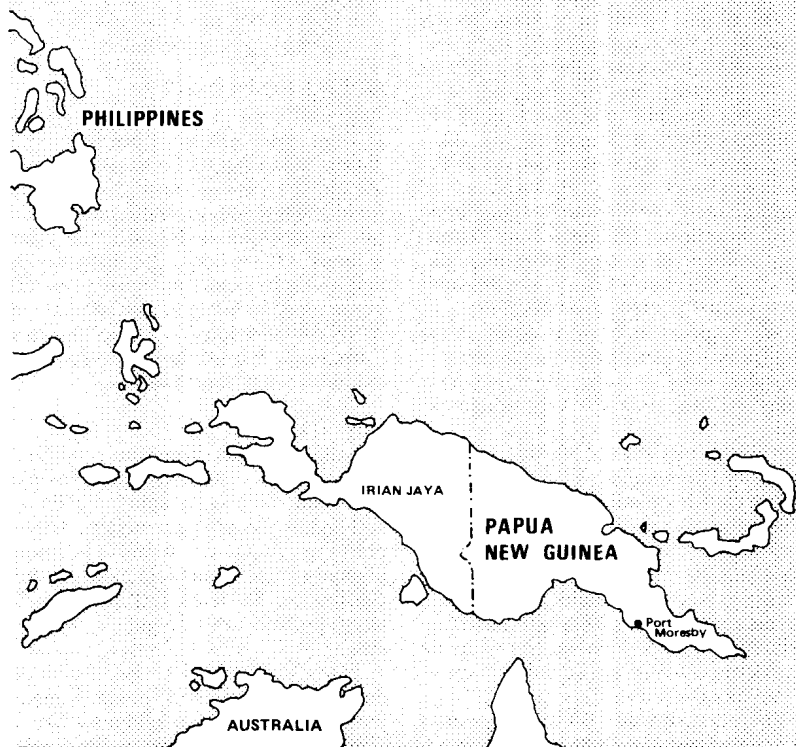
Take nearly all the cheques in large denominations, say US\$100s. It's only at the very end of a stay that you may want to change a US\$20 or US\$10 cheque just to get you through the last day or two. Many institutions charge a per-cheque service fee so changing US\$100 in 20s can end up five times as expensive as a single US\$100 cheque. In most countries these days the exchange rate for travellers' cheques is better than the exchange rate for cash.

It is a good idea to take some cash with you. Often it is much easier to change just a few dollars (when leaving a country for example) in cash rather than cheques – and more economical. When banks are closed, cash is also better. In countries where there is a black market, cash is what's wanted, not travellers' cheques. Note that big denominations get a much better rate than small ones; nobody wants US\$1 notes. Of course the odd dollar laid in the right place (the right hand) can perform wonders.





South East Asia



12 Facts about the Region

If you run out of cash, due to simply having spent it all or from more disastrous events, and need more, instruct your bank back home to send a draft to you (always assuming you've got some cash back home to send!). Specify the city and the bank – once I made the mistake of saying 'to your usual bank' and then spent a day trying to find out which was their 'usual bank'. If you don't know a bank then ask them to write to you and tell you where it is. It's probably a good idea to ask them anyway; I recently discovered that Lonely Planet's bank in the US had dealings with about 20 different banks in Hong Kong, but not including the Hong Kong & Shanghai, probably the biggest of the lot!

Transferred by cable or telex, money should reach you in a couple of days, by mail allow at least two weeks. When it gets there it will generally be converted into local currency – you can take it as it is or buy travellers' cheques. Singapore and Hong Kong are easily the best countries in this book to transfer money to. Malaysia and Thailand are not bad either but even Indonesia and the Philippines are far and away easier than places further west like India and Pakistan where money transfers seem to drop into a bottomless pit, sometimes never to be seen again. Papua New Guinea is almost like an extension of Australia when it comes to transferring money so doing it there is very straightforward.

If you're very sound financially an ideal travelling companion is an American Express card. It amuses me how many backpackers also have their credit cards! With one of these you can put a lot of things (like airline tickets) on your account and save carrying so much money with you. If you run low, rather than have money transferred out to you from home base you can get an instant cash transfusion from any American Express office. Very convenient.

There are other ways of carrying money or obtaining cash as well. In some places you can cash Eurocheques or personal cheques

with the appropriate identification. Some Dutch travellers I met on my last circuit of the region explained how with a Dutch post office account they could conveniently obtain cash from Indonesian post offices, very useful in the many Indonesian towns where there is no bank.

Your budget is dependent upon how you live and travel. If you're moving around fast, going to lots of places, spending time in the big cities, then your day-to-day living costs are going to be quite high. People who tell you they spent six months on a dollar a day did it by sitting on the beach for five months and three weeks. The dollar-a-day places are fast fading! Remember you're not on some sort of travelling economy run – being tight with your money can mean you miss out on the whole purpose of being there.

WHEN & HOW LONG?

Anytime for any time might be the answer to this one. Although there are wet and dry seasons the changes are not as distinct as they are on the subcontinent. Nor are there seasons when you can and cannot do things (as for trekking in Nepal). The climate sections of the various countries and regions detail what to expect and when to expect it, but anytime is the right time somewhere or other! And how long? – why as long as you can manage. It would be easy to spend years exploring South-East Asia.

HEALTH

A British medical magazine published an article actually describing the 'overland syndrome' – a collection of afflictions suffered by many Asia travellers. Although one of its symptoms was said to be a strange propensity for eastern clothing the article finished on the reassuring note that this, along with the other symptoms, was easily cured.

They don't tell you how to avoid that danger but most other possible medical problems are covered in books like *The Traveller's Health Guide* by Dr Anthony Turner (Roger Lascelles), *Staying Healthy in*

Asia (Volunteers in Asia Publications) or *Travellers' Health* by Dr Richard Dawood (Oxford University Press).

Health and fitness while travelling depend on three things – your pre-departure preparations, your day-to-day health care on the road and how you handle any medical problem or emergency that does develop.

Pre-Departure

Reducing health problems while travelling involves several pre-departure activities.

Health Insurance & Medical Kit A travel insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is a wise idea. There are a wide variety of policies and your travel agent will, no doubt, have recommendations. The international student travel policies handled by STA or other student travel organisations are usually good value.

The most important thing, however, is to check the small print. Lots of policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities' which can include scuba diving, motor-cycling, even trekking. If those sorts of activities are all on your agenda then you don't want that sort of policy. Check if the policy covers emergency flights home. South-East Asia is not a high medical cost area so you don't need the very high payout policies particularly intended for travel to North America.

A small, straightforward medical kit with any necessary medicines, band-aids, antiseptic, aspirin and a small thermometer is a good thing to carry. In Asia you'll usually find that if a medicine is available at all it will generally be available over the counter and the price will be much cheaper than in the west.

Health Preparations Make sure you're healthy before you start travelling. Probably the single most important factor is to make sure your teeth are OK, there are lots of places in Asia where a visit to the dentist would be the last thing you'd want to do. If you're shortsighted bring a spare pair of glasses and your prescription with you.

Losing your glasses can be a nightmare, but in places like Singapore or Hong Kong you can get new ones made very quickly and probably at a much lower price than back home.

Plan ahead for getting your vaccinations since some of them require an initial shot followed by a booster. If you're only travelling to very hygienic places like Singapore or Hong Kong no vaccinations are required, but the further off the beaten track you go the more necessary it is to take precautions. The possible list includes:

Smallpox Smallpox has now been wiped out worldwide so smallpox immunisation is no longer necessary.

Cholera Cholera is a result of insanitary conditions and usually occurs in epidemics. Cholera vaccinations offer protection for six months and are recommended although the degree of protection is not high. If cholera shots are a sneak preview of the real thing it is definitely a disease to avoid. Vaccination may be an entry requirement if you are coming from an infected area.

Typhoid & Tetanus Immunisation against both typhoid and tetanus is highly recommended. There are three types of vaccinations available – plain typhoid protection, TAB, which protects against typhoid and paratyphoid A and B; and TABT, which provides the whole lot including protection against tetanus. TABT lasts for three years.

Hepatitis Gamma globulin offers up to six months' protection against hepatitis, and because of its relatively short protection period it should be given as close to departure as possible. Doctors say the latest form of gamma globulin offers better protection and, equally important, doesn't hurt so much!

Polio If you've not had a recent polio booster it's not a bad idea to get one.

Yellow fever shots, which last a nice round 10 years, are only necessary for Africa or Latin America. Vaccination enthusiasts can

also consider protection against typhus and plague but there is a limit! As proof of all these scratches, jabs and punctures you need an International Health Certificate to be signed and stamped by your doctor and local health authority. In some countries (Australia, the UK, many countries in Asia) immunisations are available from airport or government health centres. Travel agents or airline offices will tell you where.

Day-to-Day Health

Staying healthy while travelling is mainly a question of care. The more careful you are then the less likely you are to face problems. The three important considerations in South-East Asia are care in what you eat and drink, climatic precautions and malaria.

Eating & Drinking You have to eat well to stay healthy, but it's also important to be careful in what and where you eat in order to avoid stomach problems. Although stomach upsets are far less common than further west, for example in India, they're still a good possibility. Often they can be due simply to a change of diet or a system unused to spicy food. Many times, however, contaminated food or water is the problem. Be careful in what you eat and drink – make sure food is well cooked and hasn't been sitting around; make sure fresh food has been properly cleaned; and don't drink untreated water except in places like Singapore or Hong Kong where the water is safe. Personal hygiene, including washing your hands frequently, also helps. If avoidance fails see below for advice on what to do next.

Climatic Precautions South-East Asia is hot and the heat can cause problems for the unwary. First of all be aware of the power of the tropical sun; sunburn can be painful so wear a hat, cover up when necessary, use a sun blocker. Heat stroke or heat exhaustion can be a problem if you really overdo it in a very hot climate.

Be careful to keep your fluid intake up; if your urine starts to turn a dark-yellow to

orange or if you simply don't need to urinate at all then your fluid intake is too low. Drink more. Some people suffer from cramps which may be caused by salt deficiency, in some areas the salt in food may be lower than you are used to.

Prickly heat is a more mundane heat-related problem but one that usually abates as you get acclimatised. When you come from a temperate climate to a tropical climate, your pores may simply not open up enough to cope with your increased output of sweat, and liquid is trapped beneath the skin and itches like crazy. Your pores will soon open up and the problem ends. Fungal infections can be a problem due to increased dampness from sweat. Keeping dry by changing your clothes frequently, avoiding man-made fibres and using a mild powder (baby powder) can help. Wearing rubber thongs in showers offers good protection against athlete's foot or other foot infections.

Malaria Malarial mosquitoes are rife in much of South-East Asia including the more remote parts of Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, much of Indonesia and, most important, Papua New Guinea. The malaria strain found in PNG is resistant to the normal malarial prophylactics so if you're going to PNG stress it to your doctor. Elsewhere protection usually consists of a weekly dose of chloroquine. The usual alternative is daily paludrine but it is less effective.

If you are travelling to an area where chloroquine resistance is a problem it may be advisable to take an alternative anti-malarial. If the risk of encountering chloroquine resistance is slight, however, it may well be wiser to simply take chloroquine for two reasons. One is that chloroquine has fewer side effects than the alternatives. The other is that taking alternative drugs is likely to encourage the development of new strains of malaria resistant to other anti-malarial drugs.

I was travelling once with somebody who did not take malarial tabs and he caught malaria in Flores. It's not a nice thing to have and what's worse it can recur years later.

Avoid it. Further protection can be gained by keeping the little buggers at bay with mosquito nets, by burning mosquito coils and by covering bare skin at night.

Medical Treatment

If your pre-departure preparations and your on-the-road care fall through then you'll have to do something about the problems that develop. Some you can easily handle yourself. If you need medical help your embassy or consulate can usually advise a good place to go. So can five-star hotels although they often recommend doctors with five-star prices. This is when that medical insurance really comes in useful!

Stomach Upsets With simple traveller's diarrhoea the simplest treatment is to do nothing. If your system can fight off the invaders naturally you'll probably build-up some immunity. Stick to hot tea and try not to eat too much. If you do decide to resort to modern medicines don't do so too readily, don't overdo them and if you start a course of medicine follow it through to the end. There are various over-the-counter cures like the popular Lomotil. The name indicates that it 'lowers motility'; it simply slows your system down and lets it work things out. Plain codeine works as well and is cheaper. Antibiotics, on the other hand, actually go into battle for you, but I have a suspicion that people who have the most stomach problems are the ones who resort too readily to antibiotics and other 'big guns'.

Whether you just have traveller's diarrhoea or something worse the important thing is to keep your fluid intake up and avoid dehydration. Keep drinking. If your diarrhoea is very severe then you need to be rehydrated with a mixture that does more than just replenish your fluid losses but also puts something back into you.

Dysentery The word 'dysentery' is used far too lightly by many travellers. If you've just got loose movements you've got diarrhoea. If blood or pus are also present then you

probably have amoebic dysentery, which requires an anti-amoebic drug like metronidazole or flagyl. If on top of that you also have a fever then it's probably bacillary dysentery and you need an antibiotic like tetracycline or a sulfa drug. None of these drugs need the supervision of a doctor and are usually readily available.

Hepatitis Like stomach upsets and dysentery, hepatitis is spread by poor sanitation and the best prevention is care in what and where you eat and drink. If you should be so unfortunate as to get the dreaded hep the only real cure is good food, no alcohol and rest.

Cuts, Scratches & Stings Take care with simple cuts and scratches – they can, all too easily, become infected. Make sure they're properly cleaned and kept that way. Coral cuts require particular care as they're very susceptible to infection. Poisonous snake bites are very rare but if you're unlucky and do get bitten then the modern treatment is to immobilise the limb, wrap it in a pressure bandage (not a tourniquet) and seek medical help. Jellyfish stings are more likely to be painful than deadly in South-East Asia – an antihistamine can help the pain.

Bed bugs are much more mundane and the best policy is to change hotels! If you get lice there are readily available treatments. Worms are relatively rare but again treatment is readily available. Wearing thongs rather than going barefoot is again a sensible precaution. Rabies is not a severe problem in the region but avoid dogs and monkeys, it's a nasty thing to catch.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases The sexual attractions of Bangkok and Manila lead many unwary travellers (usually male ones) into these dangers. Condoms are the usual answer. And get the disease cured before you continue west. The Bangkok medical experts know far more about VD than those in India.

Final Advice

Women can face some additional, usually

minor, health problems and pregnant women should take especial care, particularly with regard to drugs contra-indicated for pregnancy. Chloroquine, for malarial protection, is not contra-indicated. Children can also pose special problems but not big ones, see the *Lonely Planet Travel With Children* guide for more information. My two children, now aged five and seven, have covered many miles in the region with hardly any difficulties.

Last, but far from least, don't be overly concerned with your health. In 15 years of kicking around Asia I've had nothing more serious than a few stomach upsets. South-East Asia is generally a pleasantly healthy area to travel around, even Bali Belly is less common and less serious than its close relation from Delhi!

ACCOMMODATION

In most of South-East Asia accommodation is no problem; about the only times you might have difficulties are over Chinese New Year, when finding a room can be a hassle in some places, and during peak holiday periods like Christmas when there is a mass exodus from Australia.

In Indonesia cheap hotels are usually known as *losmen* – they're small, often family-run places. Elsewhere hotels are often Chinese run – spartan, noisy, but generally clean and well kept. Costs are very variable but in most of the region you can get a reasonable room for two from around US\$2.50 to US\$10, more expensive in some of the big cities of course.

If you arrive in a country by air there is often an airport hotel-booking desk, although they often do not cover the lower strata of hotels. Some airport booking desks (like Bangkok's) are more comprehensive than others (like Singapore's). You'll generally find hotels clustered around the bus and train station areas – good places to start hunting. Always check your room, and the bathroom, before you agree to take it. If the sheets don't look clean ask to have them changed right away.

If you think a hotel is too expensive ask if they have anything cheaper. Often they may try to steer you into the more expensive rooms first, may simply be trying it on a bit, or may even be open to a little bargaining. A very important point to remember in Chinese hotels is that a 'single' room usually has a double bed while a 'double' has two beds. A couple can always request a single room. Many cheaper hotels throughout the region only supply one sheet on the bed, if you want a top sheet (useful for keeping mosquitoes away) you have to supply your own. I've been carrying the same Indonesian sarong around for this purpose for over 10 years now.

FOOD

Eat what you like when you want to would be my first advice, since food in general in South-East Asia is pretty healthy. A good rule of thumb is to glance at the restaurant or food stall and its proprietor – if it looks clean and he looks healthy then chances are the food will be OK too.

There are two things to be careful about – water and fresh, uncooked food. Only in Singapore, Hong Kong and some other major cities should you drink the water straight from the taps – elsewhere you should ensure that water is boiled or purified. It's no good avoiding the water if you then eat fruit or vegetables that have been washed in that unhealthy water. Ice can be a danger too; freezing things certainly doesn't kill germs. Cooked food that has been allowed to go cold can also be dangerous.

In general you should have few problems and in places like Singapore you can usually eat from any street stall with impunity. Of course you'll also find Coke and other hygienically pure western delights. McDonald's are spreading their tentacles through the region too, you'll find branches in Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Kentucky Fried Chicken have spread their influence even more widely.

Despite the pleasures of the local cuisine