

# [Assessing socio cultural aspects of tourism in thailand tourism essay](https://assignbuster.com/assessing-socio-cultural-aspects-of-tourism-in-thailand-tourism-essay/)

Thailand has a big variety of cultures, traditions and natural resources, which makes it very attractive tourist destinations. The culture of Thailand incorporates a great deal of influence from China, Cambodia and India. Thailand’s national religion Theravada Buddhism is central to modern Thai characteristics and faith. More than a few different ethnic groups from Malaysia, Burma etc populate Thailand and have mediated change between their traditional local culture, national Thai and global cultural influences. In addition, tourism development creates socio-cultural impacts in Thailand both positive and negative. The term socio-cultural impacts refer to associated changes to resident’s daily life, their values, way of life, artistic and intellectual products, architecture of people and customs.

The social and cultural ramifications of tourism necessitate careful consideration because impacts can either become assets or detriments to the Thailand community. The use of culture as a tourist attraction increases support for the traditional Thailand cultures and displays of ethnic identity. It increases also the revitalization of traditional language, arts and festivals. The use of culture to attract tourists increases also conservation of the cultural heritage of Thailand which could otherwise be lost. In addition, it helps the development and maintenance of the theatres, museums and any other cultural facilities. When residents observe tourists appreciating their culture, then a sense of renews and reinforces coming up to them.

The direct contact between residents and tourists can lead on a breakdown of negative stereotypes and increase social opportunities. Moreover, gives an opportunity for cross- cultural exchange between the residents and the tourists who learn about one another’s culture. This direct contact with foreign people offers to residents the opportunity to meet people, learn about the world and expose themselves to new perspectives. This experience of different cultures broadens horizons and increases the appreciation of different ways of living.

Tourism creates changes in economic structure and jobs resulting in changes in social rules. It generates new social and economic opportunities to locals resulting in decrease of social inequity. Furthermore, improves the living standards of residents. It gives to the community money for improvement facilities and services. The development of tourist facilities like hotels, restaurants etc increased recreational opportunities. Generally, tourism improves the quality of life in an area by increasing the number of attractions, services and recreation opportunities.

Despite its positive effects Tourism has and negative consequences for the socio-cultural life of Thailand.

Tourism generally can cause change or totally loss of local identity and values of the host country. This can be made by:

a) Commodification. The increased number of tourists who visit Thailand can turn their cultures into commodities when traditional ethnic rites, religious rituals and festivals are reduced and sanitized in order to meet tourist’s expectations. Once Thailand is sold as a tourist destination, a tourism product, the supply of arts, souvenirs, entertainment to tourists is a necessity, and vital changes in resident’s values may occur. Finally, people will not more respect the sacred sites and objects as they are perceive them as goods to trade.

b)Standardization. Thailand may risk standardization while trying to satisfy tourists’ demand for familiarity, concerning the facilities of the destination. Landscape, hotels and all the accommodation facilities, food and drinks, must meet the tourists’ need for the new. At the same time they must not be too new because most tourists are looking for more familiar things. They actually are looking for recognizable facilities in the new environment. Even in Thailand people looking hotel chains to be accommodated and famous restaurants for their food.

c) Loss of authenticity and staged authenticity. By adapting cultural expressions to the tastes of tourists or even performing shows as if they were “ real life” constitutes “ staged authenticity”. The fact that tourists desire a glimpse of Thailand’s atmosphere, taste and a glance of their life, without knowledge, staging must be expected.

d) Adaptation to tourist demands. Tourists that visit Thailand they want to buy souvenirs, arts and any cultural manifestations but in the most cases craftsmen are changing the design of them in order to bring them more in line with the customers tastes. Moreover, the interest shown by tourists, contributes to the self-worth of the artists and helps conserve a cultural tradition. Cultural erosion may occur because of the commodification of cultural goods.

Culture clashes can take place in Thailand because of the diversity of tourists with different cultures, religion, languages, values and levels of propensity.

That can leads on an overexploitation of the social carrying capacity and cultural carrying capacity that are the limits of acceptable change in the culture and social life of the host community. The attitude of Thailand residents towards tourism development may unfold through apathy, irritation and potentially antagonism, instead of welcome, when anti-tourist attitudes begin growing among local people.

Cultural clashes may further arise through:

– Economic inequality. Many tourists that visit Thailand come from societies with different lifestyle than the local people. Being on holidays they seeking pleasure, they spend a lot of money and they treat in a ways that even they would not accept at home. The local people as they also need pleasure in their life they may develop a sort of copying of this behaviour.

– Irritation due to tourist behaviour. Sometimes people visiting Thailand failed to respect their customs and their moral values, out of ignorance or careless and local people feel irritated with this attitude.

– Job level friction. A huge number of hotel chains and restaurants in Thailand employee foreign people, with more professional skills and training than locals have, in the higher level jobs. This cause friction and locals usually feel irritated and the gap between the cultures increases.

– Ethical issues

Crime generation- The growth of tourism in Thailand increases the crime rates, like in any other county with a mass tourism. Tourists usually carry on them cameras, jewellery and a big amount of money that make them attractive to the thieves. Thailand has the highest death rate of any nation for Britons on holiday, some 224 Britons died in Thailand between April 2005 and March 2006.

Child labour- Young children are employed in jobs in the tourism sector with low pay. The most jobs in this sector have working conditions like long hours, unstable employment, little training and poor chances for qualification.

Prostitution and sex tourism. Generally, the sexual exploitation of children is a worldwide phenomenon but in Asia is more prevalent than elsewhere. The exact number of child-prostitutes in Thailand is not known, but Thailand’s Research Institute reports that children in prostitution make up 40% of prostitutes in Thailand. It is a major destination for tourists from the Western World who travel to this country to have sex with prostitutes. The huge economic disparities between Thai locals and the Western tourists contribute to the proliferation of sex tourism to Thailand. Children are exploited in sex establishments and are also approached directly in the street by tourists seeking sexual contact. Thailand is also a top destination for victims of human trafficking and a major source of trafficked persons.