
FLY & RIDE GUIDE

Packing for Hot-Weather Motorcycle Travel

Thailand & Tropical Southeast Asia

Packing for a motorcycle trip through Thailand is very different from packing for a European tour, a winter ride or a long unsupported overland expedition.

You are dealing with heat, humidity, tropical rain, domestic flights, rental motorcycles and limited luggage space.

The objective isn't to prepare for every possible situation. It's to carry the **smallest amount of gear that you will genuinely use**, while still having proper motorcycle protection and everything you need to travel comfortably.

For most Thailand Fly & Ride trips, the basic philosophy is simple:

Pack for 4–5 days. • If it can't dry overnight, don't bring it. • Don't pack "just in case."

Choose gear with more than one use. • Wear protective gear you will actually keep on.

1. PACK FOR 4–5 DAYS — NOT FOR THE LENGTH OF THE TRIP

Whether you're riding for seven days, two weeks or three weeks, you don't need three weeks of clothing. Pack enough for roughly 4–5 days and wash as you go. Thailand has laundries, self-service washing machines and wash-and-fold services almost everywhere motorcycle travellers are likely to stay.

A typical clothing rotation might be:

- 4–5 lightweight quick-dry shirts
- 2–3 pairs of lightweight shorts
- 4–5 pairs of quick-dry underwear
- 4–5 pairs of lightweight socks
- 1 lightweight long-sleeve shirt or polo
- 1 pair of lightweight long pants
- Swimwear if your shorts don't already serve that purpose

That's generally enough. If you're packing 12 shirts because you're travelling for 12 days, you're carrying unnecessary weight.

2. IF IT CAN'T DRY OVERNIGHT, DON'T BRING IT

This is one of the most useful rules for tropical motorcycle travel. Your everyday clothing should be light enough that you can wash it at night and comfortably wear it again the following morning.

Look for: quick-dry technical shirts, lightweight underwear, lightweight socks, thin travel shorts, lightweight trousers.

Heavy cotton clothing might feel comfortable at home, but once soaked with sweat or washed in humid conditions it can remain wet for a surprisingly long time.

THE OVERNIGHT TEST — Ask yourself: *Can I wash this tonight, hang it in the hotel room and wear it tomorrow morning? If the answer is no, think seriously about whether it belongs in the bag.*

3. WEAR IT → SHOWER IN IT → WASH IT → HANG IT → WEAR IT

For really lightweight technical clothing, you don't even need to wait for a laundry. Come back from the ride. Jump into the shower wearing your shirt, underwear or other washable base layers. Wash them. Rinse them. Take them off. Hang them. Wear them again the next day. It sounds basic because it is. And it works.

4. TAKE A PORTABLE CLOTHESLINE

A small travel clothesline is one of the highest-value items you can carry. A lightweight pegless line weighs almost nothing and gives you somewhere to dry clothing in hotel bathrooms, balconies, guesthouses, apartments and rooms without proper hanging space. A couple of metres of drying space can save you carrying several extra days of clothing.

5. DON'T PACK "JUST IN CASE"

This is where luggage gets out of control. You pick something up and think: "I probably won't use this... but I'll bring it just in case." Do that ten times and suddenly you have another five kilograms.

Thailand isn't an unsupported expedition across an empty continent. There are convenience stores, shopping centres, pharmacies, motorcycle shops, markets, laundries, hotels and petrol stations. If something is cheap, easily available locally and only has a small chance of being needed, you probably don't need to carry it around the country for two weeks.

Ask: When am I actually going to use this? If you can't answer that question, leave it at home.

6. EVERY ITEM SHOULD EARN ITS PLACE

The best Fly & Ride gear does more than one job. Examples:

- **Buff / neck tube** — Sun protection, dust protection, sweat control and an extra light layer.
- **Lightweight long-sleeve shirt** — Casual wear, evening wear and sun protection.
- **Quick-dry shorts** — Casual wear, hotel wear and potentially swimwear.
- **Lightweight waterproof shell** — Rain protection, wind protection and an extra layer if temperatures drop.
- **Microfibre cloth or small towel** — Drying, cleaning helmet visors or general use.
- **Insulated bottle** — Cold water on the motorcycle, hotel bottle and sightseeing bottle.
- **Phone** — Navigation, camera, bookings, translations, communications and document storage.

The more jobs an item can do, the more valuable it becomes. A bulky, single-purpose item that might only be used once should have to fight very hard for space in the bag.

7. DON'T BRING RIDING GEAR THAT YOU WON'T ACTUALLY WEAR

Protective equipment only protects you when it's on your body. A heavy adventure jacket might provide fantastic protection on paper. But if you're riding through Thailand in high temperatures and humidity and the jacket ends up strapped to the luggage after the first hour, it is providing zero protection.

For tropical riding, you need to find the balance between impact protection, abrasion protection, ventilation and comfort. A quality armoured mesh or highly ventilated motorcycle jacket may be a far better real-world choice than a heavy multi-layer adventure suit. The same principle applies to riding pants. The goal isn't to bring the strongest-looking gear. The goal is to bring good protective gear that you are willing to wear all day, every day.

8. USE THE FLIGHT TEST

A very simple way to test your hot-weather riding gear: Wear your riding pants and jacket on the flight. If they are already too heavy, restrictive or uncomfortable while sitting in an air-conditioned aircraft and walking through an airport, think about what they'll feel like after two hours on a motorcycle in tropical heat.

If you don't want to wear them for a flight, there's a good chance you're not going to want to wear them for two weeks — or even two days. The flight test also has another advantage: you're wearing some of your bulkiest equipment rather than trying to cram it all into your luggage.

9. DON'T WEAR WATERPROOFS ALL DAY

Thailand can produce very heavy rain, but it is still hot. A fully waterproof laminated riding suit can quickly become uncomfortable because you're effectively trapping heat and moisture inside it.

A better hot-weather system for many riders is: **Ventilated protective riding gear + separate lightweight waterproof outer layer.** Keep the rain layer packed away until you actually need it. When the rain stops, take it off again and restore the airflow.

10. KEEP YOUR RAIN GEAR ACCESSIBLE

A tropical shower can arrive extremely quickly. Your waterproof jacket and pants shouldn't be buried underneath your clothes, toiletries, shoes, packing cubes or electronics. Keep them where you can reach them immediately. Ideally, you should be able to stop the bike and get into your waterproof layer without unpacking your main luggage.

11. YOUR MOTORCYCLE GEAR IS ALREADY MOST OF YOUR LUGGAGE

Before packing any casual clothing, remember what a Fly & Ride rider is already carrying: helmet, jacket, riding trousers, motorcycle boots, gloves, rain gear, intercom, action camera equipment, chargers, and possibly motorcycle-specific accessories. That's a significant amount of gear before you've even packed one pair of shorts. Build your packing system around the motorcycle equipment first. Clothing comes second.

12. PLAN HOW YOUR HELMET WILL TRAVEL

A helmet is one of the most awkward things involved in a Fly & Ride trip. It's bulky, expensive, relatively fragile, difficult to compress, and something many riders don't want thrown around in checked baggage. Decide how you're going to transport it before arriving at the airport. And don't simply assume your airline will allow the helmet as an additional cabin item. Check the baggage rules attached to your particular booking.

13. WATCH DOMESTIC FLIGHT BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES

The international flight that gets you to Thailand may provide a generous baggage allowance. Your domestic flight may not. This becomes particularly important if you're flying between places such as Bangkok and Chiang Mai, Chiang Mai and Phuket, Bangkok and Phuket, or Bangkok and Krabi. Different airlines and fare classes can have very different cabin and checked-baggage allowances. Motorcycle equipment is heavy and bulky, so check before you book, not at the gate.

14. DON'T BRING TOO MANY SHOES

Shoes consume enormous amounts of luggage space. For most Thailand motorcycle trips, two pairs are enough: 1 × motorcycle boots and 1 × lightweight casual footwear (lightweight trainers, walking sandals, sandals or thongs/flip-flops). You probably don't need riding boots, hiking boots, running shoes, dress shoes and sandals. Every item has to earn its place.

15. KEEP CASUAL CLOTHING SIMPLE

Thailand is generally very easy to dress for off the motorcycle. Your hotel, restaurant or evening clothing doesn't need to be complicated. A lightweight polo or collared shirt and a pair of lightweight trousers or shorts will cover most situations encountered on a normal motorcycle trip. You're travelling to ride motorcycles. You're not packing for six different dress codes.

16. PACK YOUR CLEAN CHANGE WHERE YOU CAN REACH IT

After several hours riding in tropical conditions, your priorities when you reach the hotel are usually: Helmet off. Boots off. Shower. Cold drink. Clean clothes. Keep one complete change together somewhere easy to access (shirt, shorts, underwear). Don't bury it at the bottom of your luggage.

17. USE PACKING CUBES — BUT KEEP IT SIMPLE

Packing cubes work extremely well for motorcycle travel because they make moving into and out of hotels easy. A simple system might be:

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- Cube 1 — Shirts / casual clothing
 - Cube 2 — Underwear / socks
 - Cube 3 — Riding base layers
 - Small pouch — Electronics
 - Small pouch — Toiletries / medication

That's enough. You don't need 14 separate organisers. Organisation is meant to make travel easier, not turn your luggage into a filing cabinet.

18. DON'T CARRY A COMPLETE BATHROOM

Pack the toiletries you need to get started. Thailand has convenience stores, supermarkets and pharmacies everywhere. There's generally no need to carry three weeks of shampoo, soap, toothpaste, shaving products, sunscreen or general toiletries. Take travel-sized amounts and replenish locally. The exception is anything that is medically necessary or where you genuinely need a particular product.

19. MEDICATION IS DIFFERENT

Essential medication should not be treated as a "buy it when I arrive" item. Carry enough prescribed medication for your trip, plus an appropriate buffer. Keep important medication, prescriptions and medical documents where you can access them. The Fly & Ride philosophy is about removing unnecessary luggage — not removing important personal medical requirements.

20. HYDRATION GEAR EARNS ITS PLACE

Hot-weather riding means drinking regularly. A reusable or insulated water bottle is worth carrying because it serves you on the motorcycle, at fuel stops, in hotels, walking around towns and on day trips. You don't necessarily need a huge hydration system for every ride. Water is widely available throughout Thailand. What matters is having something convenient enough that you'll actually drink regularly.

21. SUN PROTECTION IS PART OF YOUR KIT

It's easy to think you're protected because you're wearing motorcycle equipment. But during stops, sightseeing, ferry crossings and lunch breaks, you'll often be standing in direct tropical sun. Useful items include sunscreen, sunglasses, a cap or hat, a buff, and a lightweight long-sleeve shirt. Again, try to choose items with multiple uses.

22. ELECTRONICS CAN DESTROY A LIGHTWEIGHT PACKING SYSTEM

It's easy to pack a phone, tablet, laptop, action camera, second action camera, drone, smartwatch, intercom, camera and power bank. Then you need batteries, chargers, cables and adapters for everything. Before packing each device ask: What am I genuinely going to use this for? Where possible, standardise around USB-C and carry one quality multi-port charging system instead of multiple charging bricks.

23. DON'T FLY YOUR GARAGE TO THAILAND

On a rental-bike trip, you're renting the motorcycle. You don't need to bring half your workshop. Unless your trip has unusual requirements, avoid carrying large tool kits, multiple spare parts, heavy workshop equipment, large quantities of consumables, or full-size emergency equipment designed for unsupported expeditions. Take sensible personal safety equipment. Let the rental company deal with the motorcycle.

24. ONE MAIN BAG IS BETTER THAN FIVE SMALL ONES

When you leave the airport and pick up the rental motorcycle, everything you brought has to fit on it. A bad setup looks like: large suitcase, backpack, camera bag, helmet bag, shopping bag, loose jacket and other miscellaneous gear. A better Fly & Ride system moves easily through Airport → Hotel → Motorcycle → Hotel → Airport. Ideally, you're dealing with one main motorcycle-compatible bag and perhaps one small personal item. The less repacking required, the better.

25. LEAVE EMPTY SPACE IN YOUR BAG

Don't pack your bag so tightly that closing it requires ten minutes of wrestling. Leave around 10–20% spare capacity if you can. During the trip you'll inevitably add water, snacks, laundry, small purchases, souvenirs, extra layers and things handed to you by other riders. A bag that's completely full before you've left home becomes irritating very quickly.

26. A PRACTICAL 10–14 DAY THAILAND PACK

RIDING GEAR

- Helmet
- Ventilated armoured motorcycle jacket
- Ventilated riding pants
- Lightweight riding gloves
- Motorcycle boots
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Lightweight waterproof over-pants
- Buff / neck tube

CLOTHING

- 4–5 quick-dry shirts
- 2–3 lightweight shorts
- 1 lightweight long trouser
- 1 lightweight collared shirt or polo
- 4–5 quick-dry underwear
- 4–5 lightweight socks
- Swimwear if required
- Lightweight casual shoes / sandals
- Cap

WASHING

- Portable travel clothesline
- Small laundry bag
- Small amount of travel detergent if preferred

ELECTRONICS

- Phone
- Action camera if required
- Motorcycle intercom
- Power bank
- Multi-port charger
- Minimum necessary charging cables

PERSONAL

- Essential medication
- Small toiletry kit
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Basic personal first-aid supplies
- Passport and document wallet

USEFUL EXTRAS

- A few packing cubes
- Small microfibre cloth
- Insulated / reusable water bottle
- Small luggage scale
- A few zip-lock bags

27. THE FINAL BAG TEST

Before closing the bag, pick up every item and ask:

- Will I realistically use this?
- Can another item do the same job?
- Can I wash it instead of bringing another one?
- Can I buy it cheaply in Thailand if I genuinely need it?
- Does the rental company provide it?
- Am I carrying it purely “just in case”?

And for your clothing: *Will it dry overnight?*

And for your protective motorcycle gear: *Am I genuinely going to wear this all day in tropical heat?*

If the answer keeps coming back no — leave it at home.

THE FLY & RIDE HOT-WEATHER RULES

1. **PACK FOR 4–5 DAYS.** Not for the length of the trip.
 2. **IF IT CAN'T DRY OVERNIGHT, DON'T BRING IT.** Lightweight and quick-dry wins.
 3. **WEAR IT. SHOWER IN IT. WASH IT. HANG IT. WEAR IT.** Simple systems work.
 4. **TAKE A PORTABLE CLOTHESLINE.** A few grams can replace several days of extra clothing.
 5. **DON'T PACK “JUST IN CASE.”** Pack for what you're actually going to do.
 6. **CHOOSE GEAR WITH MULTIPLE USES.** Every item should earn its place.
 7. **USE THE FLIGHT TEST.** If your riding gear is uncomfortable in an airport and aircraft, think about how it will feel on a motorcycle in tropical heat.
 8. **PROTECTIVE GEAR ONLY WORKS WHEN YOU WEAR IT.** If it spends the trip strapped to the motorcycle, it isn't protecting you.
 9. **KEEP YOUR RAIN LAYER SEPARATE AND ACCESSIBLE.** Ventilation when it's dry. Waterproofing when it's wet.
 10. **CARRY LESS. WASH MORE. RIDE MORE.**
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THE GOLDEN RULE

A Fly & Ride trip is not about seeing how much equipment you can carry.

It's about moving easily from:

Airport → Bike → Hotel → Bike → Airport

Take the protective riding gear you trust.

Take the personal items you genuinely need.

Take a small rotation of lightweight clothing.

Make everything else justify the space it occupies.

PACK LIGHT. WASH OFTEN. RIDE MORE.