

Gio On The Go – Moving & Travel Resources for Southeast Asia

➔ **Introduction**

Moving or traveling to Southeast Asia? Whether it's short-term travel or a long-term relocation, having the right tools, resources, and guidance can make your journey stress-free and enjoyable.

I've lived in the Philippines, Vietnam, and now Thailand for over 9 years, and explored Malaysia. This guide highlights the best apps, services, and gear I personally use—plus ways I can help through one-on-one consultations for a smoother transition.

Country Insights (Quick Highlights)

- **Philippines** – Affordable lifestyle, English widely spoken, strong expat communities, tropical islands.
 - **Thailand** – Modern infrastructure, easy visa runs, vibrant expat communities, diverse food scene.
 - **Vietnam** – Fast internet, vibrant cities, strong café culture, rich street food.
 - **Cambodia** – Relaxed visa policies, low cost of living, slower pace, growing expat hubs.
 - **Malaysia** – Multicultural, modern healthcare, mix of city and island life, great for digital nomads.
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■ **Preparing for Your Move (Updated & Expanded)**

✓ **Downsize & declutter** – Letting go of unnecessary stuff is freeing. Sell, donate, or store only essentials. Consider shipping boxes only for items you can't replace locally.

✓ **Update documents** – Renew credit cards, driver's licenses, passports, and any identification. Carry digital copies in the cloud.

✓ **Cancel unneeded subscriptions** – Avoid paying for things you won't use abroad, like gym memberships or local streaming services.

✓ **Shipping & Luggage** – Use reliable services for heavy or valuable items. Only bring what you can't easily replace. Pack lightweight, quick-dry, and multipurpose clothing for hot, humid climates.

✓ **Travel Essentials & Gear** – From luggage to adapters, travel-friendly clothes, and security items, check my recommended gear at: giointhephilippines.com/shop

✓ **Mail Forwarding** – Use services like Traveling Mailbox to manage your U.S. or home-country mail online.

✓ **Banking, Money & Financial Preparedness** – Keep a bank account at home for long-term stability but use apps like **Wise**, **Revolut**, or **Moreta Pay** for everyday transactions in Asia. Make sure you choose banks that work internationally and reimburse ATM fees, such as **USAA**, **Navy Federal Credit Union**, **Charles Schwab**, **Fidelity**, and others. Carry backup cards and a small amount of local cash.

💡 **Emergency Savings** – Always have a savings buffer for emergencies and initial start-up costs. I recommend **\$10,000 USD**, but it's possible to do it for less if you're careful. **Never let yourself get down to the last \$1,000 before considering returning home**—this is not the place to risk becoming homeless or financially stranded.

✓ **Phone & Communication** – Keep your U.S./home number with Google Voice or T-Mobile or Mint. Buy a local SIM for data and calls (SIM cards are cheap and fast in SE Asia).

✓ **Housing** – Start with hotels or Airbnb. Don't rush into long-term rentals, condos, or buying property. Spend at least a month exploring neighborhoods.

✓ **Relationships** – Avoid live-in partners early on. Take your time before committing, especially if dating locals.

✓ **Transport** – Rent a motorbike or car first before buying. Learn local traffic rules, insurance options, and safe driving areas.

✓ **Clothing & Shoes** – Bring essentials that fit, especially if you're larger-sized. Many countries have inexpensive clothing and shoes, so don't overpack. Quick-dry and lightweight materials are ideal. Check out my Gio's Travel Essentials.

✓ **Health & Insurance** – Get travel or expat insurance before leaving. Research local hospitals, clinics, and emergency contacts. Keep prescriptions handy with generic alternatives available locally.

✓ **Cultural Preparation** – Learn basic local phrases, customs, and etiquette. This will help with everyday interactions, renting housing, and avoiding misunderstandings.

✓ **Networking** – Join expat Facebook groups, meetups, or coworking spaces to get tips, meet friends, and find community support.

✓ **Safety & Security** – Use apps like **Google Maps**, **Grab**, or local ride-hailing apps. Keep digital backups of important documents and avoid carrying large amounts of cash.

✓ **Food & Groceries** – Explore local markets and supermarkets for affordable, fresh produce. Western stores (like S&R, Landers, or Rustans) are available in major cities if you need familiar products.

✓ **Exploration & Patience** – Give yourself time to adjust. Southeast Asia can be chaotic at first, but slow travel allows you to find hidden gems, safer neighborhoods, and better deals.

Online Security

Surfshark VPN – Protect data, unblock sites.

👉 Surfshark VPN

(https://get.surfshark.net/aff_c?offer_id=934&aff_id=17091&url_id=1320)

Dating

👉 Christian Filipina – Serious relationships. (<https://bit.ly/RecommendedDatingSite>)

👉 PinaLove – Free, simple dating in the Philippines.

(<https://www.pinalove.com/?ai=3494&cid=1>)

👉 ThaiFriendly – Meet Thai singles. (<https://www.thaifriendly.com/?affid=3494>)

Travel & Health Insurance

👉 SafetyWing – Best for nomads/expats.

(<https://safetywing.com/?referenceID=24748534>)

👉 Ekta – Great rates, visa-friendly. (<https://ektatraveling.tp.st/f04cVbN1>)

👉 Michael Onstad (Expat Insurance / LOC Consultants) – michael.onstad@loc-consultants.com or  <https://www.facebook.com/monstad1>

Money & Essentials

👉 Wise – Low-fee transfers. (<https://wise.com/invite/dic/giovannis229>)

👉 Moreta Pay – Pay like a local in SE Asia.

(<https://app.moretapay.com/invite/giovanni407104>)

👉 Onward Ticket – Proof of onward travel.

(<https://onwardticket.com/giointhephilippines>)

👉 Holafly eSIM – Instant mobile data (Code: GIOINTHEPHILIPPINES).

(<https://holafly.sjv.io/POrKr6>)

👉 Traveling Mailbox – Manage U.S. mail online. (<https://travelingmailbox.com/?ref=1384>)

Flights & Accommodation

👉 Agoda – Hotels & condos. (<https://bit.ly/38CvDgr>)

👉 Skyscanner – Cheap flights. (<https://skyscanner.pxf.io/EK0dVP>)

Essential Travel Gear

👉 Gio Travel Essentials (<https://giointhephilippines.com/shop/>)

1-on-1 Consultations

Need personal help with relocation, dating, or lifestyle advice?

👉 Book a Consultation (<https://calendly.com/gioonthego>)

How I Save on Travel & Living Overseas

I book my flights, hotels, restaurants, and daily expenses with one simple tool — my Capital One Rewards Credit Card. It keeps things easy, earns me points, and makes traveling overseas stress-free.

👉 Apply here with my referral: <https://i.capitalone.com/JehWGNx51>

(This is my personal referral link — if you sign up, we may both get rewarded!)

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