

Saturday, October 10, 2009

Well... It's been a little over two weeks since my arrival in Thailand. For those of you who don't know (or are interested), this is my first experience on the continent of Asia. So far, I actually feel less alien than I had prepared myself to feel. People go to work, eat at restaurants, shop (like crazy), watch the news, play soccer, etc. Except for experiencing the DTs from a total lack of hockey, I feel pretty much at home.

I fear, dear reader, that my first entry may make me appear a tad... shallow. I wish I could say that I have hugged a tiger, avoided elephant dung on the sidewalk, met the king, or experienced some other exotic adventure. However, I am ashamed to say that I have spent the majority of my time in markets, malls, and restaurants. Shopping really seems to be the national pastime here - probably, as conjectured by Joe Bowman (the guy who hired me and my tour guide for the first few days), due to the heat. Malls are, after all, air-conditioned.





I guess it's somewhat forgivable (and, therefore, I forgive myself!), considering that I had to go out and collect all of the amenities of daily existence (couldn't fit the toaster in my carry-on). The reader may choose to overlook my predilection for bartering (complete with obligatory haggling) over the basic necessities of life, given the circumstances of my situation. Still, I feel sort

of hypocritical considering that I am, basically, a socialist without the restrictive “-ist” label. Imagine me quoting Ferris Bueller, quoting Jon Lennon. Neither of those guys believed in -isms, either.

I have been to several of the enormous malls here - Pin Klao, Siam Paragon, Tesco Lotus' galore - and I've also been to many of the outdoor markets. If you're ever in Thailand and can take the heat, stick to the outdoor markets. You will get a lot more for your money, trust me. The air-conditioned malls charge about the same for most things as you would pay in the states. The possible exception to this is clothing but even this is much cheaper if you find a vendor with something you want. I've become comfortable with the haggling aspect pretty quickly, to my surprise. They seem to crave that as part of the transaction. Who am I to disappoint?

Ahh... but the food.

The food is amazing. I swear that vegetables in the states have no flavor. I would never have thought such a thing, had I not tasted carrots with a distinct and rich flavor, tomatoes that burst onto your tongue like... well, there is no metaphor. Trust me, the food is unbelievable. I happen to love spice and here,

they do it right. You have to come here to understand (and please do).

It was truly amazing when Amy and the other two cats (Mattie and Nadia) joined Sophie and I here. I can't believe I'm on the opposite side of the earth from most of the people reading this. Don't worry, We don't have to hold on too tightly, although Mattie has had the hardest time adjusting. I was so happy to see Amy's beautiful face upon her arrival. Since she came, we've had a great time (other than my four days of some illness that kept me near the bathroom at all times). I couldn't have done this without her.



I guess that's it for now. I really will try to post my prattling nonsense once a week or so. I hope you will visit again.