

Post



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Rabbit, Rabbit - March 1, 2023

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Although still adjusting to the 12 hour time difference, we wake at a reasonable hour. After a good night's sleep we both remember to say "Rabbit, Rabbit!" first thing. (This is de rigueur on the first of each month... look it up). That is supposed to continue our good luck for another 31 days.

We don't have a lot planned for today... Coffee, lunch and dinner. Definitely more pool time and maybe more wandering downtown. That's about it. Karen does want to get in the real water at some point, and we need to go out and see some of the nearby beaches. The long-tail boats are constantly coming and going and these nearby beaches are where they're coming from and going to. We need to find out why.

At 8am we again hear music being played for the entire city. We assume it's the muslim call to prayer, but it sounds different. We ask The Google and discover it's Thailand's national anthem, "Phleng chāt". That, we read, translates to "National Anthem". You got us there. The lyrics are heart warming and speak of a united people who love their independence.

The second verse gets a bit more serious, explaining how they are "...not cowards in war", and how they will "...sacrifice every drop of our blood for our nation... ready to die for freedom, security and prosperity." We make a mental note not to mess with these guys. Maybe when so many of your neighbors became colonized by the English, Dutch, French, etc. it makes sense to try to avoid a similar fate. We read when the anthem is played all Thais stop what they're doing and stand in respect. They take it very seriously.

While looking things up about Thai history, we see the 2004 tsunami and so check our elevation. Our hotel room is at 184' above sea level. We're probably OK, but will keep our ears open for any sirens.

Before we head into town we put on our sunblock. Somebody's cousin or significant other works for a dermatologist and insisted we only buy sunblock with zinc as an ingredient. We do and this is the first time we're using it. My goodness how white we become. And the streaks refuse to blend! We don't look as bad as Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg (see accompanying photo), but we're pretty sure this stuff works.

We have a good Lunch at a hipster place named Cru. On the walk back we sign up for a boat trip for tomorrow. We'll be picked up at our hotel at around 8am (groan). We signed up for the trip going to Hong Islands, the supposedly less congested of the local islands, and we'll get there on a speed boat (rather than a long-tail boat, which we're told is slower). They need at least 10 people for the trip and they already have well over that number. We're on! Later in the day we pick up some snacks for the trip. We read that the lunch is toward the end of the string of beaches, so if you're used to an earlier lunch, bring snacks. We shop at a local convenience store, considering the Bugles (formed corn snacks)... or Oreos. Well, in reality these are all the local knock-offs thereof. We settle on cashew nuts.

For dinner we go to Rakhang Thai Bistro and Bar. We're getting recommendations from Trip Advisor and it got rave reviews. It's part of a local Holiday Inn (no offense Holiday Inn). Still being jet lagged we get there early which means it's empty and it's happy hour: two for one drinks, just what we need. Karen orders white wine and silly me, I order a mojito (well, two mojitos). Only afterwards do I think this is a bad idea. Ordering anything with ice is risky and ordering anything with fresh uncooked greens is even more so. Stay tuned for any follow-up announcements. The Thai dish was good (although they withheld the hot spice given that we're obviously from the US). Karen's fish (sea bass) wasn't great. Oh well.

Strolling homeward we remark on the variety of people who drive motorbikes. Mothers with their infant toddlers on their laps. Young teenagers. Entire families on a single bike. Grandmothers in burkas. They're everywhere. Also on the roads here are trucks with bright, tacky ads for the local Muay Thai boxing. Huge speakers on the roof loudly encourages everyone to attend tomorrow night what sounds like the fights of the century. The best of the best... the champions of the champions. We gather these fights and this gross solicitation go on all the time so we pay it no mind.

Eventually our ride picks us up and we head back to our hotel and room. We're still having trouble staying awake past nine.

Photos



Karen relaxing in bed, having coffee and consuming the news. Enjoying vacation life.



Our smart phone says our room at the Andakiri is 184' above sea level. Well above any errant tsunami, we're sure.



The Ronald McDonald's here give the customary Thai greeting. That's not enough to get us into their Golden Arches.



Burger King, not to be outdone, is offering up an array of regional delicacies. Even for so few Thai Baht we'll pass.



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We end up at CRU. Tasty and good service. We're undoubtedly not hip enough for them, but they take our Baht anyway.



Much of the beach sand is silky powder that feels great on the feet. But some is just shells, like this small guy. So perfect. So small.



Before heading to any beach Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg puts on sun block.



The internet here is pretty good. But don't look up at the wiring connecting the city. You don't want to know how the sausage is made!

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Muay Thai boxing is big here and the ads are ubiquitous. That guy in the lower left doesn't look overly confident.



Motorbikes are everywhere, ridden by everyone. Thankfully all the drivers here are quite patient and courteous.

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