

Post



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# Just one of those days - March 15, 2023

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## ***SUMMARY***

The day it all goes to hell! Not really, I'm exaggerating, but we did have our first glitches of the trip: nobody to pick us up at the airport, one of our suite's two air conditioners went kaput and we both think we caught a cold from our tour guide in Thailand. But, our suite is super spacious, has an ocean view and the resort is gorgeous! - Karen

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### ***DETAIL***

The day started out well enough, if getting up at 3:45 am is 'going well'. Within 15 minutes we are dressed, packed, have a quick sip of coffee and are out the door. On a hallway table I intentionally leave those cheap Bose noise-cancelling headphones I'd bought on Craigslist for the flight over. We had no charges so checkout is super quick. We are over the pedestrian bridge and in the airport in minutes.

It is just after 4am but there are a ton of people. We look for any other obviously non-Asians and see none. The line for checking our luggage takes a few minutes and soon we are baggage-free, pretty much and breeze through security. Starbucks sells us some coffee and a quiche, which uses up almost every last Baht we have (by design). We, and a ton of other people (including one really cute asian baby boy) wait for our flight to start boarding.

Onboard we find ads not only on the overhead luggage compartment doors, but on the back of (almost) every tray table. We're in an exit row, so we're special. We have diagrams showing how to open the emergency over-wing exit door. Having the knowledge of how to open the doors is one thing, but they don't want us deciding when to do it. We have to listen to the flight attendants for instructions. Will my Thai or Balinese be good enough?? Thankfully it doesn't come to that.

Our onboard meals, US\$4 per, were fine. Mostly baked chicken with sauce and a ton of very white rice. Teriyaki Chicken at 7am, that's not our normal way. As the flight is over four hours long we do use the 'facilities' a couple of times. After you wash your hands, you look for the hand towels to dry off. Theirs are Kleenex, facial tissue. We're seeing a pattern in this part of the world. No toilet tissue in the bathrooms, but it is used on planes to dry hands and in restaurants as napkins. Hm.

Off the plane we see deep blue skies and bright white clouds. We aren't in Thailand anymore. Step one is VOA (Visa On Arrival) where we pay US\$35 per person for a (?) 90 day visa. After we grab our luggage, the next two stops are at immigration ("is your passport yours and valid?") and customs ("show the QR code that proves you've had all your Covid vaccinations").

The walking path weaves us back and forth between steps, and after customs that pattern continues. There are more desks and more people in uniform waving us over. WAIT A MINUTE... these are Currency Exchange desks and these are sales people! Nice try! There are many such desks and each has humans and ATM machines. We deal with one ATM machine and take out a cool million. Rupiah. Converting that is easy enough, just multiply by 0.000065. So we'd taken out US\$65. Continuing on there are official looking "Buy our SIM card for your smartphone" desks, and duty free stores.

Eventually we get to where the outsiders can be waiting for you. We see a few people holding pieces of paper with names on them. THIS is what we're looking for. Then we see more, and more of these. They go on for 100 yards, and the same distance around the corner. We don't see our names!! We check two more times. Nope! We've been abandoned!

We message our tour company. They apologize and say something about traffic. "Take a taxi, we'll pay you back". I had looked it up and it's a tad less than a mile to our hotel. Our phone rings again. The message this time? "For God sake, whatever you do, do not take a taxi from anyone but the official taxi desk!!" It's hard to hear them over all the people shouting at us "Do you need a taxi?" and "Hire me, hire me".

At the hotel we check in. The lobby is open air and it's huge. There's a slight breeze wafting through, keeping us cool. It's 1:30 pm so we're lucky they have our room ready. The bellman walks us over and installs our luggage. We look around. We can definitely feel at home here, it is about the size of our own home back in Austin, yikes! It's not that expensive, but it does look at the ocean. Between us and the water is a private covered patio, a shared lounging area, a shared pool, and beautiful grass. This will do nicely.

We unpack and go swimming and return to our room. One of the two A/Cs has gone out. Whoops! They try to fix, and get it going again, but don't have a lot of hope it'll stay fixed. It needs a new [insert two Indonesian words here] which they can't get til the morning. It stops again soon after they've left. Thankfully the working A/C is in the bedroom. Since we can't hang out in the living room we head to the bar. (Oh, dang)

At 5:00 we meet with Putu, the coordinator for our tour of Bali. We go over the plans and answer questions. He gives us a welcoming fruit basket and a bottle of Balinese wine for the airport pickup snafu. We do have questions.

#1: "We have read in different places that the size of the group on our tour might be around eight people, or that it might be less than 30 people. How many people will be on our particular tour?"

#2: "Can we please NOT do the part of the tour that has us getting up at 1:30 AM and hiking two hours to the top of a mountain to watch the sunrise?"

Answers? #1 "Only two", and #2 "Of course".

Our reaction: "Oh, my", and "Whew".

We watch the sunset and agree we've both most likely picked up a cold from our tour guide in Thailand. Crap. Plus being stranded at the airport, and our broken A/C... not the best day. To end the day we walk the boardwalk and then split a sandwich in the hotel dining room. Finally, off to bed (we did get up at 3:45 am).

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## Photos



4 am, time to give up our luggage. Yay!



Being watched as we wait for our plane.  
These spies are getting younger and  
younger.



Adverts on the overhead baggage doors,  
AND on the tray tables. What next?



6:30 am. The sun also rises.



Finally in Bali and finally some clear,  
beautiful sky!

FARNSNIENTE





Does one of these have our names on it??  
Oh, please, oh, please.



Headed  room. This part of the world  
definitely  is a bougainvillea problem.



Our (soon to be warm) living room. Pool and ocean off in the distance.



On our bed, to welcome us, a towel lady with a plumeria flower in in her terry cloth hair.



Meeting with Putu to get caught up on tour plans. Fruit and wine as a welcome gift and 'sorry for stranding you at the airport'



The sun also sets. We're close to the equator so sunrise and sunset aren't too far from 6:00

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