

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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Bye-Bye, Bali - March 23, 2023

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SUMMARY

Up before the sun after our incredibly relaxing day yesterday. Flights to Singapore then Siem Reap, Cambodia, a new country for us! Beautiful hotel with a swimming pool we could fall into from our patio. Hot, hot, hot as we walk to dinner at a very good French restaurant in the French Quarter. - Karen

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DETAIL

The call for "lights out/electricity off for 24 hours" went out at 6 am yesterday morning. It ended at 6 am today. As if on cue, the birds outside started chirping exactly at 6 o'clock!

Our flight today (Bali > Singapore > Siem Reap, Cambodia) is scheduled to leave at 10:30 am. We're to be picked up by our guide and driver at 6:30. [wait... this just in...] just got a message (via WhatsApp) from our guide. They started the one hour (plus) drive here from Denpasar at 5:30 am, only to be turned back by police! No one on the roads til 6 am! Duh. They'll be late. Whoops!

They do get us to the beautiful Denpasar International Airport in plenty of time. We have already checked in to our Singapore Airlines flight (though for some reason they won't give us our boarding passes.)

"Fly you to Cambodia? No, we can't do that. Not unless you can prove you'll also be leaving Cambodia" (no wonder we couldn't get our boarding passes).

"May we see your plane tickets OUT of Cambodia, please?" No, we're taking a boat. "Hm, really. Proof?" We sort through lots of documents that all say "Scott Farnsworth for two passengers". They don't prove Karen's leaving Cambodia. Hm. Karen finally finds something from the Lotus Cruise company, with her name on it, about our Mekong River cruise to Vietnam. Whew!!

Through security and immigration I was again tripped up briefly, this time at the airport bathroom. The men's room graphic shows a man in a sarong. It looks like a women in a dress to me! I'm temporarily flummoxed.

On our two plus hour flight to Singapore we get a lunch (and another lunch on our two plus hour flight to Cambodia). We are intrigued by the packaging and 'silverware'. It's all biodegradable. Nice! (Sadly the food was only so-so.)

Siem Reap (~275,000 people) is Cambodia's second largest city (after Phnom Penh). The name means "HaHa we defeated Siam" or some such thing. On our approach we see few signs of life. One small road. Houses built on stilts in a wide river. No factories or warehouses. There is an enormous, perfectly rectangular "lake" a ways in the distance. (We learn later this is a huge man-made reservoir.)

We climb down the stairs from the plane and swim through the humidity in the bright sun towards the terminal. It's size and design makes one think of an oversized Howard-Johnson's. It's intriguing and I'm tempted, while waiting in line at Cambodian immigration, to take a picture. The big "No pictures or videos!" sign makes me think better of the idea.

Our hotel picks us up and we dive into the air conditioned van. For the first time in a month the steering wheel is on the correct side! We're each offered a chilled towel and a bottle of cold water. We're honored but soon learn these life preserving measures are fairly standard here.

It's a twenty minute drive into town and to our hotel. The driver makes heavily accented small talk. We notice, first on the 'one lane in each direction' road, and later on the 'three lanes in each direction' road, how very few vehicles there are here. It's 4:15 pm on a weekday. Are we in Pyongyang??

Our hotel is delightful with two pools, one right off our back porch. There's a Hemingway-esque typewriter in the room!! We do some cursory unpacking and wipe another cold washcloth across our faces and head out. We got up early (4 am body time) for today's flight and lost an hour somewhere en route. Tomorrow we're up at 4 am (again), this time to go see temples. We are going to dinner early!

I find three good looking French restaurants and Karen narrows it down to one. We hike the few blocks there. The scenery and traffic remind us we're not in Kansas anymore.

The restaurant interior is classy comfortable. Karen wants everything on the menu. Example prices (US dollars): Vodka Martini - \$4, appetizers - \$6.50 each, entrées ~ \$14. No tax or tipping, please. We start with blue cheese soufflé and gazpacho with crab. For our main courses we have scallops and salmon. There's an amuse bouche, fresh rolls, and the requisite bottle of Macon Village (US\$35). It is divine and Karen is in her happy place. Karen asks if we might can come back two more times.

Photos



The Denpasar International Airport is new and nice, we highly recommend it. (But be careful with the men's rooms)



Our tour guides use WhatsApp to message us. They know my name starts with Sc and end with T and has two letters somewhere. More often than not, I'm Scoot.



I wonder if our travels and eating have made me fat. This message, on the jet bridge, doesn't help.



Biodegradable packaging for inflight meals and 'silverware'. Cool!



Howard-Johnson's, er, Siem Reap International Airport. (Well, I guess Brownsville, Texas has an International Airport, too)



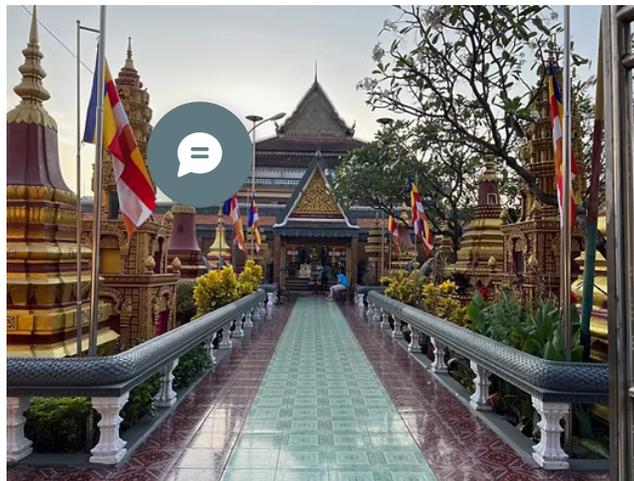
In our room. Some kind of old word processor and a high tech coffee maker.



The pool outside our room. Ahhh. Yes, it's nice. Our room is (?) third one on the left.



A motorcycle with kitchen growing off the back. At least 100 things on offer on the displayed menu.



A temple. A Wat? Yes, a Wat. (That we passed on our way to dinner)



Also passed the local branch of the Cambodia People's Party. Somehow they've been in power forty years. Go figure.



Karen in her happy place (a French resto)

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