

My First 24 Hours in Thailand

by Kristin B.

After months of packing up our lives in Texas, finishing our old jobs, packing suitcases, and reading about Thailand & Super English, we were finally on our way to Thailand! Before we left, it seemed like this day would never come. I had done so much reading and thinking about Thailand, that it kind of felt surreal to finally be on the plane headed towards this new country.

After hours of traveling, our plane finally touched down at the international airport in Bangkok, Suvarnabhumi. Even though Bangkok was not our final destination, I was already feeling excited. We were finally in the country we had been preparing to move to for months! When we got off the plane, we made our way through the airport, found baggage claim and set off to find the taxi line. Our flight to Surat Thani left from the Don Meaung domestic airport, so we were going to have to take a taxi across town to the other airport. Peter had sent us detailed instructions on the correct way to get a taxi, so knowing exactly what to do, we made our way to the taxi line. Suddenly, I remembered reading something on the Super website about a mysterious free shuttle between the 2 airports that people had heard about but never really seen. I decided to ask around and see what I could find out about this supposedly free shuttle. The nice lady at the information desk pointed us to "Exit Gate 3", where we easily found the free shuttle parked, ready to whisk us away to Don Meaung. We hopped on, waited 20 minutes or so for the next scheduled departure, and then were on our way.



The drive through Bangkok was kind of a blur as we were both starting to feel pretty jet-lagged. All I really remember is that we both started to feel sick about halfway through the ride as the driver accelerated then hit the brakes about 20 times every minute. I'm not sure what he was doing, but that sounds like a typical thing to wonder about many drivers in Thailand. The bad driving combined with our jet lag made the ride seem a little long, but really it was only 45 minutes, and hey, it was free! We hopped off the shuttle, got checked in for our flight to Surat Thani and then waited around the airport for a few hours.

On the quick flight to Surat, I started to get a little nervous. What were we thinking moving halfway across the world? Did we really pack up our lives to teach English in this strange, new country? I didn't have much time to worry though, because before I knew it we were landing in Surat and my nervousness was swept away by excitement.



After easily finding our bags on the one & only baggage carousel in the whole airport, we started looking around for Wen. She quickly identified us, we introduced ourselves, loaded up the car, and headed into Surat.



As we sped past green jungle and tall palms, I began to feel more and more excited. Soon, the vines and palms started to turn into buildings and cement as we entered Surat. Wen took us straight to the Big House, our new home for the next year. All of our roommates had already arrived a few days prior, but everyone was over at Levi & Savannah's place in the jungle. We dropped off our bags and then Wen drove us to

their place. We met all the other teachers, introductions were made, and everyone decided to meet up later to eat at the night market. We spent the afternoon unpacking and getting a little bit settled in our house.



Later that night, everyone met up at the Big House. Levi brought our motorbike over, which we bought off a former Super English teacher. We decided we were definitely not ready to drive our motorbike since it was dark, we were jet-lagged, and we hadn't practiced yet. We hopped on the back of Levi and Savannah's bikes and headed towards the night market. Riding on the back of a motorbike for the first time in Thai traffic was quite a thrilling experience. My mind bounced back and forth between thoughts along the lines of, "This is awesome!" and "This is completely terrifying!".

At the night market, we walked by endless stalls of food, clothes, accessories, and more. We saw all sorts of food - some of it looking really appetizing (red pad thai), some of it definitely looking not so appetizing (bugs). I finally ordered some food by pointing & nodding at a tasty looking pork dish. By this point, I was already loving the night market and knew we would be frequenting it often, since it is so close to Super English.



After dinner, everyone decided to move along to the pier, where we set by the river getting to know each other over a few beers. Eric & I didn't last very long though. Jet-lag started to kick in again, so we decided to call it a night and head back to the Big House for some much needed sleep.

When we got back to the Big House we realized that the only bedding we had was the one top sheet we brought from home. We didn't even have any pillows, but we were so tired it didn't matter. Luckily we had no problem adjusting to the time difference. As I drifted off to sleep, I thought again about how the whole day almost felt a little surreal. Like I said earlier, we had been preparing for our move to Surat for a while, so I basically had to keep pinching myself to see if it was really happening. In some ways it was a blur, but writing this article two months later, I remember all the events of the day clearly. It was an exciting whirlwind of a day - the start of a new adventure in Thailand!