

Erfahrungsbericht, Siam University Bangkok, Thailand

Alina Kolsch

3./4. Fachsemester WS2014/15 & SS2015

Internationale Betriebswirtschaftslehre/ International Business



Almost a year ago the big adventure ‘studing abroad’ did begin. I was looking forward to it but also a bit afraid. A lot of what-if questions where in my mind. What if I won’t find any friends or no apartment? What if Thailand wasn’t the right choice for my studies abroad? But when I look back all these questions were unnecessary.

Acctually there is not much to prepare before you leave to Thailand. Of course you should have insurances, a visa, booked a hotel and have enough money for the first days. Writing about money reminds me that you should check whether your debitcard functions in Thailand or not. New european debitcards require a higher safty standard but most of the ATMs in Thailand do not fulfill these requirements. Means you can’t take out money. I was lucky to not experience these difficulties. Everything else can be done in Bangkok.

To find an apartment is not difficult in Bangkok. There is a lot unused living space in all price ranges. Most of the apartment buildings are organized like a hotel. They have a lobby, a receptionist, small conviencence stores, a laundry room, security and sometimes small restaurants and a pool. Most Thai apartments are already furnished but have no kitchen since most Thai people do not cook. So just walk up to a apartment complex and ask for a free condo. When they have one you can see it immidetly and in most cases move in the next day.



Average rent is between 5000 and 10.000baht without water and electricity. I would recommend to stay close to the university or at least close to a BTS station because it can be nerv-wracking to commute everyday by bus or taxi. During rushhour traffic is really bad in Bangkok and it can take up to 30min for 2km. Since I found new friends very quick I had help finding an apartment. That was really helpful since most Thai people can't speak english but there are actually a few things to negotiate. A friend of mine stayed in the same building as I did but I got a much better deal.



The student life is different to what we are used to in Germany. It is a bit more like school and you have to wear school uniform. Men have to wear black pants and a white shirt and girls have to wear a black skirt and a white blouse. You also get a beld and a pin from the university. Students are really proud of their university and like to show it to the outside world, means they also

wear school uniform after school. Before I came to Bangkok I thought I hate school uniform but it wasn't that bad. We had the opportunity to choose between a few skirts and you can still make your look individual by wearing shoes, make up and so on. I personally like the campus a lot. It has everything you need for the day. A 7/11 store, a post office, a few restaurants and coffee shops, copy shops, a bank (where you also get a free bank account), a doctor, a library which is very modern, a gym and a sports hall.



The first day I chose my courses, which was a bit of a struggle but in the end I had all my desired courses. All courses were in English but in some courses I did not understand single word and I doubt Thai students did. In general the

university is a bit unorganized. I got used to it after a few weeks and found a way to deal with it.



The best thing about Thailand is to live in a completely foreign culture and of course to travel. Thailand has a lot to offer. The most beautiful islands are in the south and mountains are in the north. Also national parks are worth a visit. With the Thai student ID the entrance fee for national parks and most attractions also within Bangkok are cheaper or for free.



Generally traveling in South-East Asia is cheap. The best way to travel to closer destinations is by minivan or bus. It is fast and reliable. Once I took the overnight bus which I would not recommend. Streets are in a bad condition and are extremely bumpy. I found no sleep. Whenever I had the chance I took the overnight train. It takes forever and is a bit more expensive but compared to Europe it is still cheap. For about 20€ you get a 2nd class air-conditioned, bed ticket to the south which is about 700km from Bangkok. Flying within Thailand and international flights are also affordable. I would always recommend traveling to some unpopular regions.

Over the year I got to understand the Thai culture. I never had a real culture shock although I experienced some really strange and funny things. For me it was funny to see how Thai people interpret Christmas. Or maybe they think we celebrate it like this. They had Christmas decoration in front of a shopping mall which you can see on the picture. I have never seen a connection between Christmas and Snoopy before but apparently there is one.



In Thailand they have a different calendar. They live in the year 2558 and their new years (Songkran) is celebrated in April for three days. Songkran is my favorite festival ever. It is also known as the water festival and you can't leave your condo without getting wet. Everyone is equipped with a watergun and is splashing each other.



I liked to experience a new culture and to also see the other side of living. The not so happy side and it made me to be more thankful for what I have. I was happy that I had contact to local people. It opened an opportunity a lot of exchange students missed. I had the chance to live for a couple of days with a local family and to visit a monk at home. There are a lot of positive experiences I made and I found myself adapting the Thai culture. It was a great year I will never forget and which enriched me with experience and cultural knowledge.

I have always been interested in Asia and Asian cultures. So I grasped the opportunity to live in this region. First I wanted to go to China and haven't thought about Thailand a single time. Unfortunately I couldn't find a Chinese university offering other courses than Chinese culture and language. Thanks to the information evenings of HS Nordhausen I heard about the organization AsiaExchange¹. I researched their website and found the Siam University Bangkok. I chose this University because they offer all courses I need for my studies and because it had a better location than the other partner university of AsiaExchange. Now I am happy with my choice. I also got to know a bit of the Chinese culture and have to say I like the Thai culture much more.

The application process is very easy and AsiaExchange does all the important paperwork for you. They also provide basic information on their website but if you want to know more or have a question they are very helpful.

Einverständniserklärung: Ich stimme zu, dass der Bericht anderen Studierenden der FH Nordhausen zur Verfügung gestellt wird und ggf. auf den Web-Seiten der FHN veröffentlicht wird.

¹ www.asiaexchange.org