



Liam

from

Bolton

to

Thailand

“Leaving one life to return to another”

At the beginning, even a month seemed like a long time, but now that I have less than a month left of my exchange, I have learned just how short a month truly is. There are a lot of mixed emotions about coming home because I'll be leaving one life to return to another, which sounds odd and most won't understand it unless they were an exchange student but that's the best way I can describe it. I think leaving Thailand will be harder than leaving Canada because when I was preparing to come here, I always knew I would be going back to Canada but now there is a finality to everything I do, because I never will return to the life I've had here.

About a month after the last beaver tale, I went on my third and final trip to the south of Thailand. We spent one week seeing what is quite possibly the most beautiful part of Thailand. We spent the first day in the old capital city of Thailand, Ayutthaya. It was interesting to see some of the history of Thailand. We saw the Mahathat temple which is the big set of ruins in the middle of the old city, and also where the really famous photo of the Buddha head in the tree is from. We then flew to Phuket after lunch and went to the Phuket Fantasea theme park to see the show they do there. The next day we went to Koh Phi Phi to go snorkeling which was a lot of fun. I and one of my friends spent most of the time doing flips off the boat.

Then we spent most of the next day island hopping around the province of Krabi. The first island we went to was Po Da island for lunch (which gave most of us food poisoning). Then we went to see the “Separate Sea” which is kind of like the Bay of Fundy. When the tide is low you can walk between 2 islands. The next day was pretty uneventful which is good considering most of us were not feeling so great. The one thing we did do was visit the Tham Lay Khao Kob Mountain, which is a cave system under a mountain that you explore by boat.

Towards the end the ceiling of the cave is so low everyone has to lay down in the boats and even then there are times when you're scraping against the rocks.

The last two days we spent on Koh Lipe which is a small island about 45 minutes off the coast. While there's not much to do on Koh Lipe other than a walking street, there are a lot of reefs to go snorkelling. We spent the entire day snorkelling around the island which was a lot of fun up until I forgot to put on sunscreen and spent the next three days looking like a lobster. The last night was a night of a lot of mixed emotions. It was the birthday of one of the Rotarians so we had a party for her on the beach, but after the fun and celebrations started to die down we spent the rest of the night just talking with each other.

Since Thailand uses a different calendar the Thai New Year is in April and Thais go all out when they celebrate the New Year. The date of the New Year is the 13th of April but the celebrations last for three days. My family took me to Bangkok so I could experience the celebrations where they are the biggest. The first day I went to Khao San road with two other exchange students. During Songkran, Khao San is absolute madness; there are hundreds of people walking up and down the streets and everyone is spraying each other with water guns. That's the more touristy celebration. The more traditional celebration includes lots of visits to monasteries and a lot of praying and paying respects to elders and ancestors. Since we weren't in my city, my host family didn't partake in the celebrations for the most part.

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Liam