

Arrival in Thailand



When you arrive at Bangkok International Airport after 20 hours of transit, you walk down the endless monotonous corridor towards Passport Control. As you are standing in line waiting your turn to step up to the immigration officer's desk you notice the broad sign overhead, written in English as well as Thai. It read

"Welcome to the
Kingdom of Thailand.
Your impressions begin here."

Price of Admission

TS	TO	SKED	ETD	TER	REMARKS	GATE
25	Penang	0950	1030	1	Delayed	1
61	Kuala Lumpur	1000	1030	1	Delayed	5
80	Hong Kong	1020	1050	2	CK-IN ROW 12	35
21	Dhaka	1030		1	Final call	25
62	Kaohsiung	1030		1	Final call	34
6	Kaohsiung	1030		1	Final call	34
19	Kathmandu	1030		1	Final call	22
730	Kathmandu	1030		1	Final call	22
88	via Hong Kong	1030		1	Final call	6
30	Hong Kong	1035	1100	2	CK-IN ROW 15	46
10	Xiamen	1035	1045	1	CK-IN ROW 1	4
22	Luang Prabang	1040		2	Final call	76

FLIGHT'S	TO	SKED
TG 618	Chengdu	1045
TG 612	Kunming	1050
TG 658	Guangzhou	1055
TG 406	Singapore	1055
PG 932	Siemroap	1100
TG 664	Shanghai	1100
TG 614	Beijing	1105
PG 628	Jinghong	1110
TG 620	via Manila	1110
CX 754	Hong Kong	1115
AA 6107	Hong Kong	1115

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I arrived at the customs checkpoint where my suitcases went through the routine x-ray scan.

I had brought my collection of metal 1/500 scale airliners from America with me, as well as my computer, stereo, and electronic gear. After the bags rolled through the

machine the customs official looked at me gravely and announced, "You have a lot of airplanes." I was amused and then puzzled as he continued, "We'd better have a look." He opened my suitcase and looked admiringly at the models, the precisely accurate landing gear, the distinctive tail markings and colorful elegant liveries of the world's airlines.

Then he calmly explained to me that I was allowed to bring a limited amount in personal items into the Kingdom other than clothing and work related equipment, and the value of the





airplanes exceeded my allowance. I was dumbstruck. It never occurred to me that I could be taxed for airplane models! But there it was in black and white, the



information on the wall poster stipulated 10,000 baht is the limit, after that 30% of the value is to be paid. The customs agent watched calmly as I tried to digest this development, pacing in consternation and looking to the ceiling for an answer that didn't seem to be forthcoming.

You're in Asia now, throwing a tantrum and making demands only makes you lose face. Finally he gently picked up one model and said, "My son would love to have an airplane like this. Would you give me this one airplane?" What an unthinkable scheme! Give up one of my precious airplanes to this guy? Is this some kind of extortion? But I had to admit I was at an impasse, and in fact he was offering me a very good deal. And so I handed the Thai Airways



Boeing 777-300 to him and he bowed in gratitude, thanking me with humility. He assured me that there would be no further problem, and just how delighted and thrilled his eight-year old son would be to have the airplane. He then closed up my suitcases and carried them to the curb for me, shaking my hand and telling me I was a good-hearted person. I suppose this might be an old Asian Way of doing business, maybe there's a name for it. Or maybe it's just something to put under the heading the Art of Living.



Bangkok Railway Station; Next Stop, The Overnight Train to Chiang Mai

Please also visit :

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