



"So, You're Thinking of Moving to Thailand"

If the allure of Thailand has passed the 'I love visiting here' stage and progressed to the 'I'd like to live here' stage, you are definitely not alone. Of the millions of visitors each year, a sizable portion chooses to either retire here, move here to work, or purchase a vacation residence for long term stays. Along with that decision comes the need to rent or purchase a place to set up your household be it an apartment, home or condo. There is comfort in knowing that many others have already successfully moved here relatively easily. I say "relatively," because there are some things you need to consider before you take the plunge. To uproot on an emotion or compulsion without some forethought could spoil the paradise you thought awaited you.

I speak from experience. After several vacation trips to Thailand, I decided to retire here. Thinking my pleasure trips gave me enough information for moving here, I went back home, sold most of my household items and vehicle, put some stuff in storage, packed my bags to the weight limit, and then hopped a plane to Bangkok. I had no plan for when I arrived here other than

thinking I would live in Bangkok (erroneously assuming it was cheaper than Pattaya).

Although I previously traveled all over Thailand, I gained little knowledge of what to expect if I was living here. Vacationing is not the same as living day to day all year long. Even though I spent the majority of my vacations in Bangkok (so you'd think I would have known), I found out within ten days that the big city was not what I anticipated. I eventually made my way to Pattaya and have been here for five years. If I were to do it all over again, I now realize moving half way around the world would have been much smoother if I had done what I suggest below.

1. Take a fact finding trip to Thailand. As hard as it is NOT to party, see the sights or simply relax on the beach, it is a good idea to make at least one serious visit to Thailand where you spend your time finding out the following:

a. Research the cost of housing regardless of whether you plan to rent or buy a condo, an apartment, or a home. Don't just look at

prices, but also at what you will get for your money. It is a mistake to only look at newspaper ads to determine whether you can rent or buy a place at a cost that fits your budget if you don't go visit some properties and see if they are suitable for your lifestyle. On inspection, you may find you do not like the size, condition or surrounding area. Also take notice if conveniences you need are easily available close by. Where can you buy food? How will you pay your utilities?

b. Transportation is a major factor. You must be able to get round. Even if there are taxis and buses, are there traffic jams? If you plan to buy a vehicle, will there be parking available where you want to live?

c. Do you plan to work? If so, you will need a work permit and an accompanying visa. Obtaining them can be an extensive and expensive process. It is unadvisable to move here and then decide to look for a job. Talk with potential employers first and see if any are interested in you. If so, ask them what you need to do before, and after, moving here. Some may offer to obtain your work permit and visa for you.

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