

# MOVING TO THAILAND

I get many enquiries from new arrivals to Thailand who have decided to pull up roots in their native country and settle here. Most have given a lot of thought to the idea and made a decision over a few if not many previous visits.

I myself first came here in 1984 and never thought then I would finish up living here. I did not make the move permanent until 1995, partly because of an aged parent and partly because it took me that time to put my UK affairs in order (sell the house, sell the car and sort out pensions and other family affairs). Do I regret the move? Not for one second.

OK in Thailand there is an adjustment required to the “May pen rai” mindset especially if you employ someone to work in your condo or house. The driving is scary and after one near fatal miss I now get someone else to do the driving for me. Mind you that can be scary too.

An open mind it appears to me is the best quality for contented living here. I am far from being a paragon of virtue but over the years I have noticed that the malcontents living here who complain the most either drink too much, work too much or are obsessed with sex. Like everything in life, balance is necessary for me to live contentedly. To day I consider myself the luckiest person in the world to live in this beautiful Kingdom with a lovely good hearted Thai wife. I make annual visits to my homeland but increasingly I have divorced myself from the West especially

when I stop in London and get a taxi to a good restaurant. When I look at the cost I could live here for a month on one night out there.

I will always love my home country and be grateful for the benefits I received from being born and educated in the first world. I worked for a decade with the British insurer Legal & General selling insurance and investments. That background was of great assistance to me as I knew how to arrange my financial affairs when I decided to move here for good. I sometimes forget that many potential expatriates do not have that expertise and get very technical when writing these articles. While there is no substitute for a face to face meeting there are some general rules the expat should follow.

Besides living contentedly here you must arrange it that any savings and investments are tax free and outside the reach of the greedy taxmen in your home country. For most Britons selling their home there will be no Capital Gains liability if it has been your primary residence. If you have been living the expat life and have your UK property rented there is a liability but this can be mitigated. Check with any financial adviser. I would try and avoid taking advice from banks as they are usually tied to a few specific providers and give you limited choice as to what securities you can purchase. Even offshore banks who promise to send a consultant to your new home will do what? This year he may be working for

an international bank and contact you twice when he has a new product to sell. You wouldn't blame him for furthering his career and moving on and you will be left with another enthusiastic apprentice.

Try and appoint an adviser who lived in this country and who is properly qualified and just as important has a stake in this country and who is not likely to disappear overnight. You are in a position also as an expat not to be limited in the amount of tax free investment and tax free return. Living in the UK you will be used to ISA's and their forerunner PEP's which gave you limited tax free investment annually. These are good investments which you should probably keep if they have been performing well (Check with your advisor). But now the world is your oyster for tax freedom. Talk to your adviser to ensure that the sale of assets onshore can be transferred offshore mitigating taxes if you have any liability. For British expats there are really good companies listed on the FTSE 100 where you can domicile your investments offshore and take a tax free income for life paid tax free into your Thai bank. European mainland expats can do the same thing in Switzerland. There are indeed so many options that, in the euphoria of a new lifestyle it is easy to forget the biggest financial benefit of all in being an expatriate. If I can be of any assistance in smoothing your move to the land of smiles, please let me know.

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This was sent in by 'Rosie' on one of the pitfalls you may encounter if you get on the wrong side of one of the local lasses. (Presented as written with some minor edits – Ed.)

Thought you guys might get a giggle out of this one. Some of you know where I live but for the ones who don't, I live in a place where an old fart like me can get to grips with nice 20 plus ladies.

I was living with what at FIRST seemed to be a very pretty and quiet 23 year-old (lasted for over 4 years, god knows how). Well, we were having one of our very many

domestics and this one was pretty bad so she did a runner AGAIN and I nipped out for a few beers (this was in the afternoon).

I had locked the pad up and it was evening when I returned a bit worse for wear as you can imagine. I somehow find the hole for the key to the gate and then the same for the door (no lights, all in darkness). She has not come back and I stumble through the door and I think I've peed myself cos' I'm paddling with my shoes on.

I manage to feel for the light switch and saw a very sobering sight. My whole pad was in 6 inches of water. The kitchen has a 4 inch step down so that was in 10 inches of the

stuff. Then, though my sobering mind I hear running water and trace it to an open window where my garden hose has been slotted through and is turned on.

If you can imagine, most furniture out here is wood chip, so by the time I moved to another location there was no need for taking units apart as most of it was swollen and falling apart.

I went back to the bar and got a bit more ale in me before starting to clean up.

PS. Good job I was wearing my old faithful desert willies, they needed a wash.