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FPHP BULLETIN HOT & TOUR

THE CROSSROADS;
UNVEILING FOOD, TRENDS, & CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

NEWSLETTER VOL. 1/2023

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THE CROSSROADS; FOOD, TRENDS, & CULTURAL EXPERIENCES



LUSCIOUS LANTA

BY AIDA KHALIDA MOHAMED IDRIS, SURIA
SULAIMAN (DR.), HASNIZA ABDULLAH & FARHAN
FAAT

At the end of May 2023, my family had the chance of travelling to the neighbouring country up north, Thailand. It was an impromptu decision and we just packed up our bags and off we went. We travelled by car where the journey from Penang to the Immigration, Customs, Quarantine and Security (ICQS) checkpoint in Bukit Kayu Hitam took us less than three hours. At Sadao Customs and Immigration checkpoint, we were required to produce these forms before entering the Kingdom of Thailand.

The forms needed are:

- Original Car Registration Card (Grant)
- Thailand Insurance Form
- Information on Conveyance Forms (Inbound and Outbound)
- Passport
- Malaysian Driving License

For forms no 2 and 3, we can acquire these forms from the Sadao Immigration Complex, or we can get them done by tour companies located at roadside in Changloon, Kedah. Normally, these tour companies also sell Thai SIM cards and money exchange services.

As we travelled at night upon reaching Dannok, we had our dinner of the famous 'Daging Bakar' and 'Pulut Ayam' yums! We then continued our journey to Hatyai where we spent the night there. The best thing about Thailand is that the hotel's rate is so affordable (cheap!). Why do I say that is because the hotel that we checked into was only TBH 600 per night. As when this article is being written, the exchange rate is THB100=RM 13.23.

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The next morning, we bought our breakfast at the roadside stall selling delicacies such as nasi kerabu and local kuihs which are very similar to our Malaysian dishes. We also packed some of the food for the road trip which was estimated to be 4 hours before we reached the destination.

Along the way, we were enthralled by the scenery especially in Phattalung because of the mountainous view. Throughout the Phattalung highway, there were plenty of stalls selling pineapples as this district is famous for that fruit. They even sell pineapple jam that can be used if you want to



Just like the proverb says: "better to see something once than hear about it a thousand times."

BY AIDA KHALIDA MOHAMED IDRIS, SURIA SULAIMAN (DR), HASNIZA ABDULLAH & FARHAN FAAT

make pineapple tart. The best thing when you are travelling on your own is that you get to set your own pace or stop at whatever places that might interest you. For this, we got the chance to rest a while at the mountain's rest area. We were so delighted there when the locals brought down the newly felled durians and mangosteen. That indeed served as our break from the tedious driving.


To get to Koh Lanta, we need to take a ferry as Koh Lanta consists of two islands that are Koh Lanta Noi and Koh Lanta Yai. The ferry terminal at the Ban Hua Hin-Ban Khlong Mak Car Ferry Terminal (Ko Lanta Noi) charges THB20/person and for vehicles, THB100. The trip took less than 30 minutes. Upon arriving, we crossed to Koh Lanta Yai by using the Siri Lanta Bridge. Once arrived, there were many hotels alongside the beach areas and some of the famous beaches are Klong Dao, Long Beach, and Kantiang Bay.

Koh Lanta is renowned for having serene beaches as compared to other well-liked Thai islands. The hotels ranged from 5 star hotels to budget hotels. Even staying at a three-star hotel is sufficient as the hotels mostly have pools and the rate ranges from THB600- THB1000.

We chose to stay at Lanta New Beach Hotel as the owner is a Muslim, and the hotel has a nice view of the beach. In terms of food, it should be no problem for Muslim travellers as Koh Lanta's population consists of 80% Muslim community. The food there is similar to what we have in Thai restaurants in Malaysia. The normal tom yum, green curry, khengsom and Thai laksa.

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There are lots of mosques around the island too and if you have any uncertainties about the food to be consumed, my advice is to eat at the restaurants or stalls near the mosque. Normally it is prepared by the Muslim community.

One of the most adventurous things to do is island hopping. We took a package worth THB1500 per person and the tour agent took us to the Saladan pier for the boat ride. We were given aspirin for those who cannot stand the sea sickness and gladly everyone took each for themselves.

The island-hopping excursion was a chance to explore the breathtaking limestone cliffs and green waters of the Andaman Sea, by having stops for snorkeling and beach visits. We were brought to Bamboo Island. Then to Phi Phi Ley, a natural lagoon paradise that is surrounded by limestone mountains. To Maya Bay (the island made famous by the movie "The Beach"), Monkey Bay for snorkeling from the boat, and lastly is Phi Phi Don.

After coming back from island hopping we visited the Lanta Animal Welfare Centre. This is an organization that takes care of the stray animals on the island. We also explored the Old Town, known for its charming wooden houses, local shops, and seafood restaurants. Since everyone was tired from the exhausting activities, dinner was a simple one. To my surprise, the restaurant we visited served my favourite dish, the grilled catfish. That was simply awesome.

Though I first visited Koh Lanta some 20 years ago, to my amazement not many changes happened here except for the new bridge connecting the islands. Though changes are good, it must also be balanced between modernization and the aesthetic value of the cultural heritage. Just like the proverb says: "better to see something once than hear about it a thousand times."

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