

Tyla Arabas, living in Bangkok, Thailand since August 2019. Married, two cats.

Twitter: @TylaArabas

Blog: <https://lightthatmatch.com/>

We moved to Bangkok from London three years ago, six months before the pandemic. It was a surprise choice of destination. I visited Bangkok in 1992 as a stropky teenager and wasn't particularly impressed with it at the time so I made it quite clear to my partner that Bangkok was not a place I would consider. And yet, a great opportunity with a fantastic school came up and we haven't looked back since.

Thailand is hot and humid. You never get used to it but you do get used to all the other delights the land offers including a lot of air-conditioned 7/11, a classic rest stop for any city Rambler. I think the first thing that strikes you living here is how kind and welcoming everyone is. It truly is a land of smiles.

Thailand has suffered in the pandemic since a lot of its economy is based on tourism but things are making a comeback quite quickly now. Last year there were lots of political protests and things are far from settled now with the election coming up next year but it hasn't really affected our day to day life. I have colleagues who have lived through the many coups and they say that for most life continues unaffected. The anti-government protests have definitely not put us off from living here. One thing for sure though Thailand is quite technologically advanced and while English isn't widely spoken, most apps are available in English and technology makes life easy.

Depending on how you like to spend your time, there is something for everyone. Bangkok is famous for its bottomless brunches in fancy hotels but you can also go partying all night long in one of the many less luxurious bars. For those more fitness oriented there are lots of opportunities for running, cycling and swimming as long as you're happy to sweat a lot. You can also visit one of the local markets, attend cooking lessons or dine on street food. We joined the diving tribe since moving here and it's been the best thing we ever did.

Let's not forget that Thailand has a long and rich culture so there is an abundance of historical ruins to explore and temples to admire. I guess the only thing that I miss living here is easy access to arts and theatre. There are a few small galleries but nowhere near the offer of London. Prepandemic Singapore offered an easy weekend fix with regular offers of gigs and arts just a flight away but we are yet to check it out post Covid. Bangkok is also perfectly positioned if you fancy some South East Asia travel with lots of exciting destinations in the neighbouring countries waiting to be visited.

Make sure you research the schools before accepting. Top tier two and tier one schools pay well enough to lead a very comfortable lifestyle. Salaries in private Thai schools are lower than in international schools so keep that in mind. The taxes here are low and there is no national insurance so while on paper it may look like you're getting paid less than the UK, your money will go much further. Most jobs offer private medical insurance and the healthcare here is outstanding while most medications are available over the counter so no need for prescriptions.

Wherever you end up teaching, you'll never meet more polite and kinder students. Teachers rank quite highly in terms of respectable professions and misbehaving or not paying attention is frowned upon. My students get started on task before I even finish explaining what to do and say 'thank you' at the end of every lesson. Stark difference to working in the UK.