

Human i 2

Thai Tid-Bits

We left Phuket without really ever being there. It is a large island that contains a city centre in the SE, an airport in the NW and an abundance of satellite beach towns. Ours was Nai Yang, and we enjoyed our 3 days of paradise. At first, we were surprised at how Americanized the place was. A nearby restaurant, ironically run by a Frenchman was called



NY Pizza and another was the NY Bar. What was their infatuation with New York? We are in Thailand!! By the time we chilled by the pool for a couple of days, we realized that it was us that were conditioned to be **NY**Centric and not the locals since we were at **Nai Yang** beach.

'THE BEACH' on
Ko Phi Phi Ley

Getting to the ferry to Phi Phi (pronounced Pee Pee) provided a classic traveling experience. We had negotiated for a taxi (a decent 30% discount) the night before and as we checked out of the hotel in the morning, I began to chat with another couple who were headed to the same pier, an hours drive away. We decided to cut costs by carpooling and

became best friends for the next 55 minutes. We laughed and talked the trip away as a dating couple from NZ and Germany bonded with their favorite Canadian Uncle and Aunt and then sailed off into the sunshine to different islands and lives. We will never see them again but we will always have our brief time together. Travelling allows for enjoyable intersections like that, as long as you are open to looking for them.

Ko Phi Phi. It seems you either love it or you hate it. Think Whisler village with 10 times the building density at 1/10th the cost. Throw in beaches, sweat, bikini's and you might get the picture. Oh, and throw in about 5 thousand cats. How does the expression go? 'You can't swing a dead cat without hitting a live cat.' Because everything is outdoors, except most of the hotel rooms, the feline foragers basically wander wherever they want. Because of them, Carol wandered to our room, and then to the bathroom and occasionally to our balcony. Finally, we realized that Puss'n'Boats isn't a thing, so we spent most of the day on a snorkeling trip during our only full day on the island. The boat went to Phi Phi Ley, a nearby island made famous as the location for the movie 'The Beach' starring Leonardo DiCaprio. Today this uninhabited island is swarmed by boats of all sizes offering a few hours of paradise to dive, snorkel, or merely sun-worship on the beaches. The downside is that due to the hordes of humanity, they have had to close off parts of the island as it has been environmentally destroyed by the mass influx of tourists. The once flourishing coral reefs are basically dead from being trampled by booze cruisers.

It makes me wonder if Leo (which ironically is the name of a beer brand in Thailand) with his apparent concern for the environment, wishes he had never come to Phi Phi in Thailand. Perhaps his guilt is why he finds it necessary to Phi Phi all over other people who he perceives to be destroying our remarkable planet. I loved Phi Phi. I thought it was number 1. Carol thought it was more like number 2, but it's all behind us now. I am writing

The Phi Phi Islands were tragically hit by a tsunami in 2004, a day after Christmas, destroying around 70% of the area's infrastructure and much of the islands' population.

this on a ferry headed to Krabi (pronounced crabby) where it is my hope that we find huge crabs wandering the streets looking for nice Canadians to have dinner with.

PS: If you don't know Carol well enough to be aware of her affiliation with cats, suffice it to say it's not meowvalous, but Thai people are. As a whole, they are probably the most endearing people I have ever met. Perhaps my observations are valid or maybe it is just my growing impersonation of Buddha that makes them smile at me so much.



Our \$3 fruit drinks at the Pier, complete with live orchids