



## One day in Laos (or Visa Run in short)

### Description

Last night I was on my own for five hours. Only Me and Myself. A-l-o-n-e! Being alone on a world family trip is not something that happens a lot. Did I say not a lot? I meant almost doesn't happen at all. Very rare. Really. Being alone at home (well, actually in a guesthouse room) is very unusual. Because letting go sometimes and get around on my own, that happens once in a while, it's easier. But having everyone gone and me staying the room alone without being troubled by anyone or anything?? That's somewhere between rare to never happens, or at least I cannot recall when it last happened to me.

We're in **Chiang Mai** now. Behind us are some hard days (in a minute) and it seems like we're weeks far from our home in Koh Phangan, but actually we've just left exactly a week ago. Chiang Mai is kind to us also on our second visit, and this time with some families of friends which is always fun and with a long to-do list ahead of us. Who would have thought that less than a year and a half after leaving Israel we'll have a list of things to do in Chiang Mai, Thailand!

Yesterday The One took the kids to the movies (yes, The Natives watched Star Wars like the rest of the globe) and I stayed in the guesthouse. It was so much fun! I skyped with a close friend, sat quietly in a nearby café and ate a salad. Celebration!

Now I'm sitting in my room working and the kids are in their room. They're probably bored because The Central chats with me on Messenger. I must say, dears, that exchanging messages with a child is very interesting. First, I wonder where they get all these emojis from. It's so cute and also gives me as a mother the opportunity to say that I'm pretty fed up with all those icons and that he's welcomed to continue chatting with me but with his words. And then he started chatting. By the way I can nag him (put a question mark at the end of a question sentence!) and receive back not less amusing answers (â€œ????? â€œ that's for all the times to come mumâ€œ) and of course the opportunity to do something educational (I am after all the language teacher) so I sent him to write a review about Star Wars and there it is especially for you:

â€œThe movie had good effects, deep characters, good drama, interesting with many action and explosions scenes. Personally, I liked the movie very much and felt satisfied when I left the cinema. Cinema in Thailand is the same as in Israel but it has something unique and interesting because the entire popcorn shop is different. It has different devices and drinks and different popcorn. In short, a different experience.â€œ.

I promised hardships. Well. We took our visa run to [Laos](#). Early in the morning a good friend took us to the ferries pier. Ahead of us was a tough day with two flights and a lot of land connections in between. By the evening we arrived at the Thailand-Laos border crossing and spontaneously decided to try and cross it to Laos at the same evening. We wanted to hand over the visa application papers to the Thailand embassy as early as possible in the morning so we can get the visas the next day and not be required to stay over the weekend in Laos. So crossing the border at the same evening seemed a sound plan for that time.

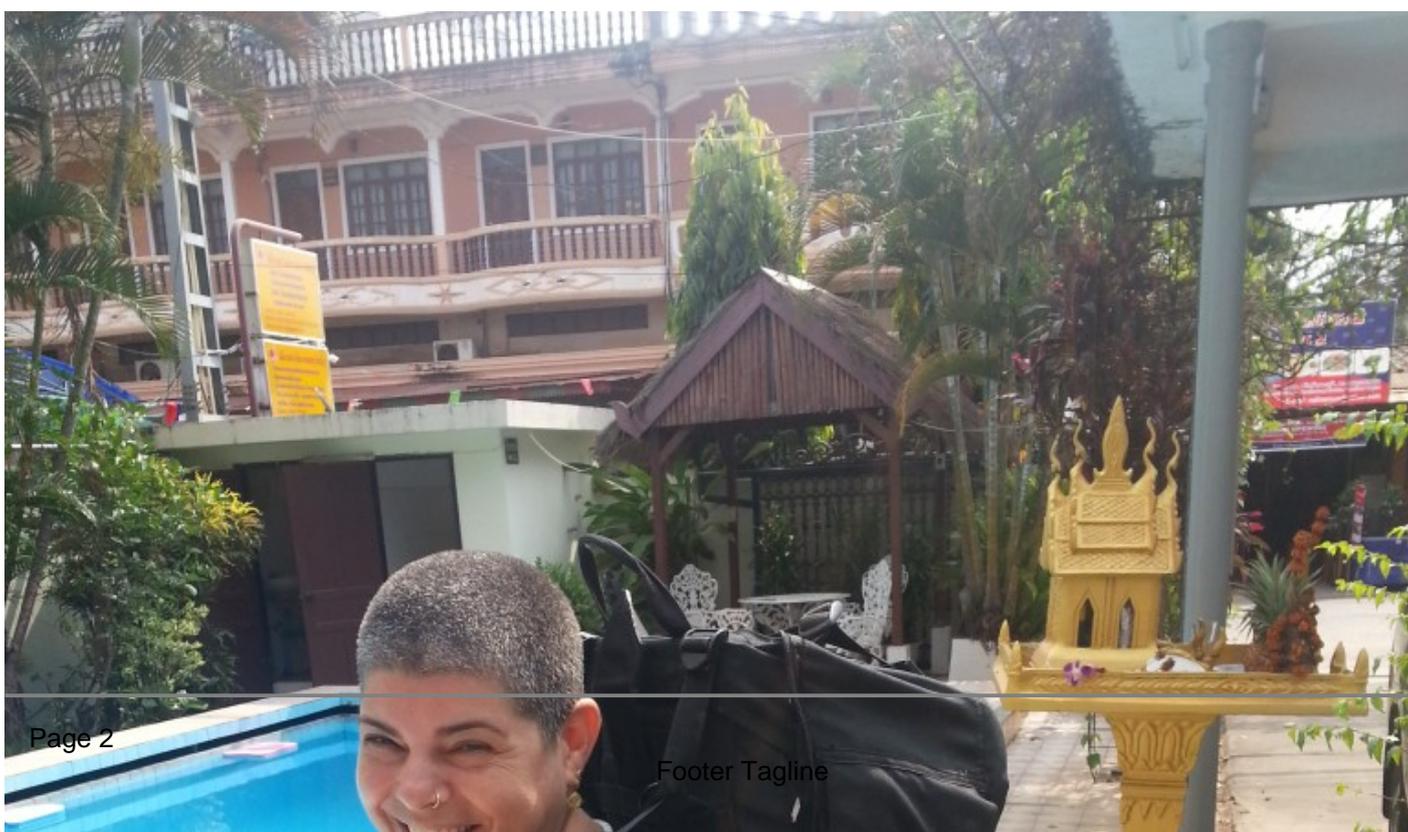
A tired official on the Thai side was less flowing with this concept. He started muttering something about the validity of the children's passport is for X months and entering Laos will require them to have X plus two weeks before expiry. He claimed that the Laos immigration will not let us through so he cannot let us through either. We asked to go to the Lao side and check if it's so. The One hit the road. An hour later I realize I'm standing in a border crossing with three hungry-thirsty Natives, it's dark, my phone is dead since more than an hour ago, all our money is with The One and our passports as well and in general situation is somewhat not too good.

Meanwhile on the Laos side, a sleepy officer (sleepy is the natural state in Laos) didn't really understand what his Thai colleague really wanted but since we've already asked he agreed to let us in but under the condition that we will check with Thailand embassy that they will also let us back in Thailand when we return. Really? Try to call and check something like this with the Thai embassy in Laos or anywhere on the planet and good luck with that.

We reached the deep understanding that we will not be able to cross the border that night. We followed our steps back to Thailand. The alternatives we had varied from bad to worse like flying to Bangkok and get new passports and other intolerable options. After a lot of tension and a night in a nice guesthouse on the Thailand side of the border, we decided to come back to the border the next morning with dumb faces as if yesterday never happened.

It worked.

We crossed the border on both sides like nothing. With a lot of accelerated heart beats, but by 10:30 we stood proud in the Thailand embassy in Vientiane, Laos. We handed over all the papers, breathed a little and said, that's it, we did all the we could and the rest is in the hands of Ja, who is after all a cool fella because there we were the next day with our passports stamped with the desired visas on our way back to Thailand.



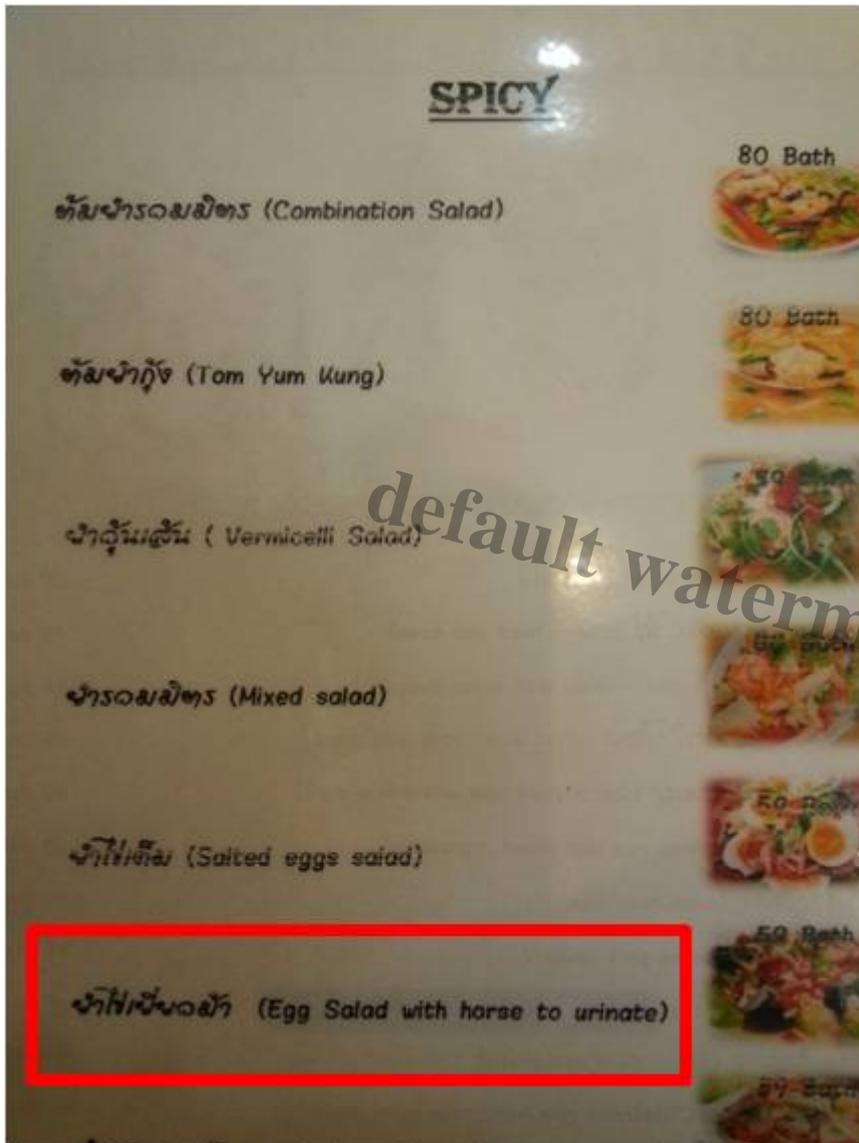
Back to my backpack

And expect of the strange and stressing finale of having our passports stamped in the Thai border in a small dark chamber with a sign that says "Screening of High Risk Groups". All in all we can say that it ran quite smoothly.

We caught a bus to a city near the border called Udon Thani. From there we planned to catch a night bus to Chiang Mai and start the fun part already. But there were no tickets available. We stayed for the night in Udon Thani. I got a sore throat that only passed when we arrived in Chiang Mai, probably the aftershock's result.



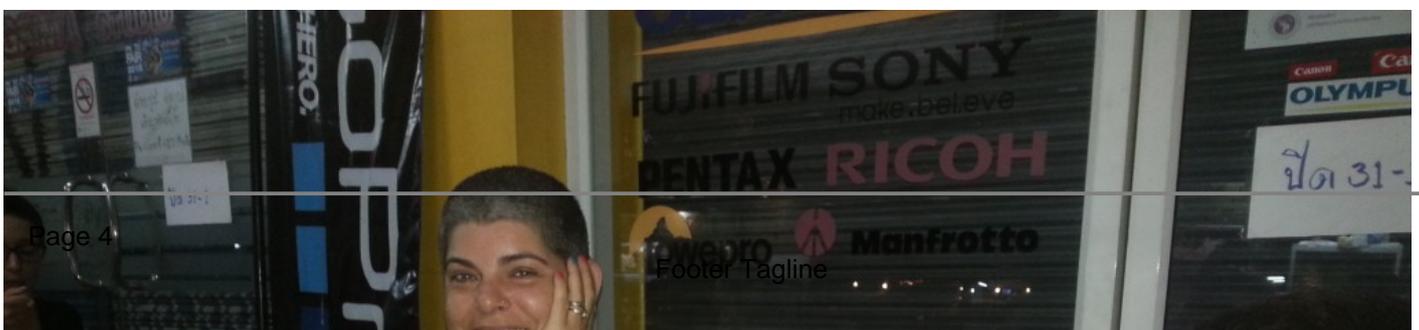
## Christmas in Udon Thani



A strange dish we found on a menu in Udon Thani

And then we arrived in Chiang Mai . We returned to the same guesthouse weâ€™ve been at on our last visit in a great location in the old city, close to everything â€“ restaurants, cafes, excellent bakery, hundreds of massage parlors and thousands of shakes and banana rotti and noodles and won ton soups stalls. Bliss.

We rest, work, doing things from the list and dining on great local food. And we miss Koh Phangan. P.S. if any conclusion should be made out of this story is that it might not be the greatest idea to cross the border at the end of the day when all the officials are tired and pissed off. And maybe not. Thereâ€™s no moral to this story, unlike Star Wars where there are many morals. So Iâ€™ve heard.



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## Feeling at home again in Chiang Mai



The wonderful street food stalls

### Category

1. Laos
2. Thailand

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