

EPTAS #9 – How many Muslims do you know?

Welcome to “Every Picture Tells a Story”; a weekly post about living in Thailand. Each week we’ll post a picture that illustrates some of the best parts about living in Thailand.

In recent times, I notice a whole lot of people taking time to bash Muslims on Facebook and other internet forums. It appears to me those that enjoy this kind of activity can’t stop once they do it the first time. It amazes me how much time people have to be hateful.

Some Muslim haters are upset about what they consider to be too many immigrants in their country and want to start culling by religion. Some bash their religious customs like praying more than once a day and eating food that has been prepared a certain way. Almost all bashers blame Muslims for deadly terrorist attacks all over the world.

It’s not an argument I want to engage in. But, it occurs to me that people upset with immigration laws should be angry at their government, not individuals looking for a better way of life. It has also come to my attention that other religions have some pretty bizarre customs and rituals. If you think halal food preparation is cruel, go in the internet and take a look at how veal or foie gras is farmed. And, as a subset of the entire Muslim population, violent terrorists are a pretty miniscule minority.

My question to you Muslim bashers is this ... How many Muslims do you know? Exactly what facts did you use to form your opinion and where did you get them? If you don’t know any Muslims or simply absorbed information from other Muslim haters, it seems like an opinion built on ignorance.

And that’s what this week’s picture is about. The three young men in this picture are Thai Muslims. A few years ago I was in Krabi during low season and these guys took me on a tour of the surrounding islands in their boat. They were also thrilled to show me their rambutan farm and introduce me to their wives and children.

While island hopping, we landed on an Ao Rilay where a popular temple is built in a cave. It was unlike any place of worship I’d ever seen. There were Buddhas, Ganeshas, Shivas, giant phallic wood carvings and Islamic scriptures written on the walls. Burnt incense and offerings were everywhere.



“What kind of temple is this” I asked the driver of our boat. “There seems to be a little of everything”.

“Most people around here are fishermen” he said. “So, we are praying for fishing success. We can’t all agree on which god is best, but we all agree ... more fish is better”.

People of different religions living peacefully together because they found some common ground ... imagine that.

Nasree, Nordeen and Somsak ... three Muslim guys I actually know. I’ll ask again ... how many Muslims do you know?

Orlando Barton