

Every Picture Tells a Story #2

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 little things those of us fortunate enough to live here hold dear.

Grandmas will be Grandmas

It’s always easy to spot someone who has only been in Thailand a short time. Invariably, newcomers constantly point out differences between their home country and Thailand. To be sure, the differences are many.

At some point we expatriates cross a threshold and start noticing how things in our old home and our new place are similar. And that is the story that this picture tells.

When I was a kid, my family was famous for taking road trips to visit the rest of the tribe 12 hours away. These were the typical family trips like you see in the movies, complete with cheesy roadside attractions and lots of chatter from the back seat like, “Are we there yet?”

My grandparents were always happy to see us and exclaim how much we’d grown. Grandma would cook day and night to make sure we were all fattened up. When we left for the long trip home, she’d gather up all manner of fruits and vegetables from her garden for us to take home. Sometimes she’d even throw in a few jars of home-made jellies and pickles. I remember thinking, “Does Grandma think we don’t have that stuff back home?”



Earlier this year, I took a road trip to Issan in northeastern Thailand. I played the role of Dad, determined to “make good time”. My wife was the consummate mom, stocking the car with all manner of drinks and snacks; insisting we stop at every reservoir, temple and minor tourist attraction along the way. And, my step-daughter managed to look up from her I-phone every hour to ask, “Are we there yet?”

Once in Issan, we were summarily fawned over and over-fed for 72 hours. On the morning of our departure, Grandma put on a breakfast spread big enough to feed a football team.

Before we were allowed to leave, she loaded us up with mangoes, okra, sweet corn and one dozen eggs so fresh they were still warm. Just before we pulled away, my wife's mother reached in the passenger side window and dropped off a bag of crispy fried chicken skin; the ultimate road trip snack.

Grandmas will be Grandmas.

Orlando Barton