

My Thailand Internship: A Journey of Fun, Friendship, and Cultural Exchange

Just two days after my final year project presentation, I found myself boarding a plane to Thailand. Managing the final project and all the paperwork leading up to my internship was a real challenge. I was juggling deadlines, presentations, and all the chaos of wrapping up my degree. But honestly, it was all worth it. After pushing through the stress and hard work of my final year, I arrived in Thailand ready for a completely different kind of challenge—my internship.

This trip wasn't just about taking a break; it was about stepping into a new professional world while also embracing the culture, friendships, and opportunities that came with it. Thailand gave me the perfect space to grow, both in my career and personally, as I balanced my work with moments of discovery and connection. The experience was filled with moments that will stay with me for a lifetime.

The Internship Experience

At Kasetsart University, I had the opportunity to work closely with the Faculty of Science and Engineering during my internship. My primary focus was on data analysis, where I utilized tools like Power BI and machine learning to support various research projects. This hands-on experience not only strengthened my technical skills but also deepened my understanding of how data analysis can be applied to solve real-world challenges.

What made the experience even more enriching was that I wasn't confined to a desk. I actively engaged in discussions with professors and final-year students, exchanging ideas and insights. Collaborating with fellow interns from different countries added an exciting dynamic to the work, as we shared knowledge, cultural perspectives, and problem-solving techniques.

Cycling, Alarms, and Lunches – My Daily Routine at Kasetsart University

One of my favorite memories from Thailand was simply cycling around the huge, lush campus of Kasetsart University. The place was so big and beautiful, it felt like biking through a peaceful forest every day. But my day wasn't complete without a little morning drama. My roommate, who became like a sister to me, had this knack for ignoring her alarm. The poor thing would ring 3 or 4 times, but she never stirred. Eventually, I'd get so annoyed that I'd wake her up myself—only for her to finally get up about an hour after I started! It became part of our quirky morning routine, and I still laugh about it today.

Our daily lunches were another highlight. There was a small restaurant right in front of our dorm where we'd head for food. Eating together with friends was such a simple, yet heartwarming experience that made me appreciate those little moments of bonding.

Scooter Adventures and Cultural Missteps

One of the funniest things happened right at the beginning. We were riding a scooter—three of us squeezing on one bike as you often see in Thailand. But my friend, who was driving, thought all three of us were on board. So, she took off... but our third friend was still standing there, looking confused! We laughed about it for days, especially imagining how we just left her behind.

But beyond these moments of laughter, the whole experience was filled with memorable cultural exchanges. I learned simple Thai phrases like “suay” (beautiful), “aroy” (delicious), and “nitnoi” (a little). It was fun trying to use them at local markets or when ordering food, though my friends and I would always laugh when I'd mix them up. Still, it was these little moments of learning and connecting that made each day feel special.

Late Nights and Lasting Friendships

We often hung out at Boxzone, our favorite place to chill with friends, especially for dinner. The food was great, and the vibe even better. But we had a bit of a problem, our dorm had a curfew at 11 pm. So, after a few late dinners, we started sleeping over at our Thai friend's place whenever we couldn't make it back in time. These impromptu sleepovers turned into some of the most fun nights, full of laughter and bonding. We ended up hanging out a lot, even going to the mall, Robinson, to watch a Thai movie that none of us understood, but somehow, it was still so much fun. One particularly unique and memorable experience was planting rice with all my friends. It was such a special moment, getting our hands dirty in the rice fields and working together,

During my internship, I met people from all over the world, Vietnam, India, Cambodia, the UK, and more. We bonded over our cultural differences and similarities, often sharing stories about our homes. I had a particularly interesting conversation with a British friend about moving out of the family home. In Nepal, it's not common, but for him, it was a natural step toward independence. That chat opened my eyes to new perspectives on life and independence.

The warmth and kindness of Thai people never ceased to amaze me. They were always ready to help, even strangers. I remember when a vendor in the university market mistook me for a local and started talking to me in Thai. I didn't understand everything, but I managed to bargain with him, and he even gave us a nice discount. Those small interactions made me feel even more immersed in the local culture.

Delicious Food and Unforgettable Moments

Of course, I can't talk about Thailand without mentioning the food! My absolute favorites were pad Thai and Thai tea. I miss them so much now that I'm back home. Even though my professor gifted us Thai tea packets, I just can't seem to replicate the same taste here. There's something about having it in Thailand that makes it extra special.

One of the unique experiences I had was visiting a Buddhist temple where we slept like nuns, no phones, no distractions, just peace. It was my first time practicing meditation in such a serene environment. I even tried Rhythmic hand-movement meditation. It was a truly calming experience, though sharing the room with geckos added a bit of excitement!

Exploring Thailand's Beauty and Adventures

Traveling around Thailand was a dream come true. From Bangkok to Krabi, Phi Phi Islands, and Chiang Mai, every place was breathtaking. Even though I can't swim, I couldn't resist snorkeling in the crystal-clear waters of Phi Phi Islands. The highlight? Watching monkeys at Monkey Beach devour watermelon—it was such a fun sight! The travel wasn't just about the destinations—it was about the people I shared those moments with. From dancing in a van on our way to the Emerald Pool to teasing each other about accents, those trips were filled with laughter.

One of the professors even took us horse riding. It was my first time on a horse, and the experience was unforgettable. The instructor was incredibly kind, even offering us free chicken and drinks afterward! It was small, generous gestures like these that made Thailand feel like home.

Chiang Mai was another standout trip. We went bamboo rafting and visited a village that reminded me of my home in Nepal. It made me feel so connected to the people and the landscape. I even started dreaming about running my own flower business after visiting the beautiful Yin Yang flower garden there.

Cultural Exchange: Bringing Bara to the Table

One of the coolest things we did was a cultural exchange program where students from Vietnam, India, Cambodia, and more came together to share a slice of their culture through food. I don't usually cook much, but being a Newari girl, I knew how to make *bara* (a type of lentil pancake). I paired it with some delicious potato (*sadheko alu*), and to my surprise, everyone loved it so much that half of it was gone before I was even done cooking! It felt amazing to share a piece of my culture with others and try dishes from all over Asia in return. Each dish told a story, and it was an experience that brought us all closer together.

Challenges and Sweet Surprises

Thailand wasn't without its challenges. The language barrier was tough, especially when trying to order food, but I learned to count in Thai from 1 to 1000 (yes, that's my little flex!). The other surprising challenge? The food. Thai dishes were often sweet, while I was used to the spicy, flavorful food of Nepal. Eventually, I sent a Nepali food recipe to a local restaurant owner, and she cooked it for us! It was such a comfort to have a taste of home, though I grew to appreciate Thai food as well.

Looking Back and Moving Forward

If I could relive any moment from my trip, I'd want to go back to the very beginning. The whole internship, from the moment I landed in Thailand on June 5, was filled with experiences that I'd love to do all over again. I want to explore another internship through IAESTE in the future, but let's see where things take me. Nothing can replace the memories I've made during this trip.

As soon as I returned from my internship, my graduation ceremony was waiting for me. Looking back, I realize how perfectly the timing worked out. It was a great way to spend the gap between the end of my academic journey and this milestone. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had this opportunity, it was the best possible use of that time!

Every day in Thailand felt like a new chapter in an amazing story. From learning new things, like hand-movement meditation in a temple, to riding a horse for the first time, the journey was beyond anything I could've imagined. The souvenirs I brought back—traditional Thai dresses, fridge

magnets, and all the memories—remind me of the incredible time I had. And honestly, I can't wait to go back.