

Your average school day in Surat Thani

By: Lee Moulden

School day:

I typically arrive at school at 7:45am to be greeted by thousands of students all wanting high fives and to just say hello. No matter what mood you're in this will always put a smile on your face. Once I am done socializing with the students for a bit I head to the office where I put the final touches on my lesson plan for the day. I then go to the coffee room and make myself a hot coffee for that much needed energy to get myself through my morning classes. I normally bring fruit from home for breakfast, but Thida also has a large cafeteria where you are able to purchase breakfast for no more than 20 baht. At 8:00am the national anthem is sung by all the students and the school day has officially begun. After the anthem is sung the students walk to class and wait to begin the day.



The first class begins at 8:15am (for my students) it could be slightly different for you depending on the grade that you teach. Every class throughout the day has the same routine which I established in the first couple weeks of teaching. I begin my class by dividing the students into 2-3 teams depending on how their desks are arranged. The students are divided into teams to help control the students as you will have anywhere from 40-55 of them. You will award the teams for being quiet, good behavior and participation. The students love the point system and are very competitive. Once the students are in their teams and team names have been chosen I begin my lesson. My lessons are very interactive to keep the class interested because once you lose their interest it's very difficult to get them back.



My day consist of 5 classes that are all 50 minutes in length. My schedule was two classes to start the day followed by a 15 minute break. On this 15 minute break I would go to the “fruit lady” who is parked directly outside of Thida and buy a fresh coconut. Then I would proceed to my third class of the day which was followed by a two hour lunch break. I would enjoy a free lunch provided by the school and use the extra time to prepare lessons for the following day. After the lunch break there are only two more classes which are separated by a 10 minute break for the students to enjoy some milk. I would be done teaching at 2:40 every day which gave me more time to prepare lesson plans for the following day.



Once 4:00pm hit the school day was over. I would bring my gym cloths to school with me and head directly to the gym after school. There are multiple gyms to choose from in Surat

but my gym of choice was Smart Gym. The gym has all the machine and free waits you need to have a proper work out and lots of new cardio equipment. During the week groups of people would also meet to play (football/soccer) and rugby. If I wasn't at the gym I would head to the stadium which is a large outdoor facility with 5 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, a large football pitch where Surats professional team plays, a large track for running and an outdoor swimming pool to swim laps. I would play basketball with a group of Thai guys I met. Who eventually invited me to play on their team. We would play in tournaments in Surat and would play pickup games every night from 5:30-8:00.



When I was done playing basketball or working out at the gym I would go home and shower and then meet up with friends for dinner. Surat has many options when it comes to food. There are lots of restaurants that offer a western style meal but are typically a bit more pricy so we would only eat there on weekends or every once in a while. There are of course lots of Thai restaurants that are very cheap and delicious. You will enjoy finding all of these new places to eat in your first couple of months here. You will continue to find places to eat as I am still finding a new delicious place every week and I have been in Surat for almost one year.



Landlord teaching us to cook a Thai dish.