

Title:

Controlled Chaos In A Thai Mega Store

Word Count:

570

Summary:

Will the Thai's ever learn to shop in a mall?

Keywords:

cart, aisle, shop, store, shopping, items, experience, thais, mall, shopping items, shopping items, 7-11

Article Body:

One of the very first things that I do when I arrive in Thailand is go shopping for items that I want to have in my room every day.

There are some toiletries that I just don't bring anymore because I would rather use the Lux liquid soap and the Thai toothpaste that I can get in any store, mall or 7-11 in Thailand.

I also make sure that the mini-bar is emptied by the bellboy immediately upon arrival and I shop for beer, sodas, chips, candy and other snacks to have in the room.

In Bangkok, I usually just go to the local 7-11 and in Pattaya I used to go to Mike's Shopping Mall. It doesn't really matter as the prices are not significantly different.

In Khon Kaen, since my girlfriend has a car, we go to Tesco Lotus. This is a store comparable to a Walmart back home. It is absolutely huge and has everything from clothes to auto supplies, to bulk items to grocery produce.

The mall or mega store is a relatively new experience to the Thai people. Normally, they shop at a small mom and pop type store. Now they can get their shopping cart, fill it up, and just say "charge it" at the cash register.

And the Thais shop like they drive. It is total chaos. It is controlled, with no anger, but there is no method to their madness.

When I go shopping, it is either for one or two items, or it is the weekly or

monthly jaunt. So, I either head directly for the items I want, or go up one aisle and down the next and visit each and every row in the store.

Aisles are either clearly marked with large arrows or they are wide enough to accommodate two carts in the aisle at the same time. And people tend to navigate the aisles the way they would a one-way or a two-way street.

The Thais do it their way. They go from aisle to aisle, stopping and chatting and blocking all that want to really shop, and give dirty looks if they have to move out of the way.

They will just stop for no reason whatsoever at the entrance to an aisle instead of parking their cart out of the way. Then they remain totally oblivious to anyone trying to get around them down the aisle.

As in driving, they believe that the cart that is one inch ahead of the other has the tight of way and can do as it pleases and the cart in the rear will just have to put up with it.

Standing in a straight line, and keeping a path open to other shoppers, is another concept that totally escapes the Thais. It is every man or woman for him or herself as they near the registers. Don't flinch or blink or the lady to your left or right will cut right in.

Once you make it to the register and check out your wares, it is time to fight the crowd in the parking lot to get to the street to experience the controlled chaos on the roads.

Shopping in Thailand is a not an experience for a novice. You will have to garner all of your strength, not give in to the cart next to you, and put up with utter craziness. Enjoy.