

One Man's Journey from Loneliness to Happiness in Thailand

My friends said "She just wants your money". My brother said "She'll leave you". My son said "You got a Ting Tong!"

Newspapers and TV portray the seedy side of Thailand and run stories on cheating, street-wise Thai bar-girls. Stories of failed relationships and Brits ripped-off by promises of love in a foreign country, feeds our suspicions of foreign cultures.

I was beginning to doubt that I'd found the girl I wanted to love for the rest of my life. The girl who greets me with a smile every time we meet; who wants to hold my hand all the time; who is hard-working; who makes me feel like I am the only thing important in her life and who is so grateful that we are together she would do anything for me. The girl that on the other hand attracts bad press; criticism from friends and family and has a reputation of being a gold-digging whore that cannot possibly understand modern western life.

The rewarding truth about Thai girls is difficult to find because of the disapproval you meet here when investigating the subject. Thai dating sites just let you go-for-it and you alone are responsible for any failed attempts for happiness. I wish IsanLove had been around when I started out five years ago. But I have no regrets as I now have a healthy understanding of the cultural differences and an insight into home-grown, misguided assumptions.

Following the failure of my 20-year marriage I felt my opportunity to enjoy a rewarding relationship was gone. Who would want a 50 year old guy with two teenage kids? I tried the UK dating sites and putting myself 'out there' but eventually had to admit to myself that the ladies that were responding to me were not exciting me. I was still young and randy but I was faced with potential relationships that would make me feel I'd retired from active life. It was like preparing to go out with your Mum!!

My ex-wife left me for a bloke 15 years younger than me. In the UK this is quite acceptable. Other UK women would most likely say "Wow! Where can I get one?" So why is it not acceptable for me to find a girlfriend 15+ years younger than me? In the UK I'd have to pay £100 an hour for a young lady that 'truly' wanted me! In Thailand a much younger girlfriend or wife is perfectly acceptable. Thai ladies prefer mature, Western men for their life-long partners. They see us as more reliable and loyal than the majority of Thai men who are notoriously unreliable and look for every opportunity to have affairs. As a result Thai girls are proud to have a 'farang', foreign husband.

Despite the stigma at home of a Thai bride I was drawn to the beauty and availability of Thai girls on Asian dating sites. I was surprised and encouraged by the reception I got immediately I put my profile up. These young, beautiful girls wanted to know me. They wanted to chat to me every day. We spent hours on webcam chatting about everything. My age and looks were of no matter. At last I was feeling wanted and worthwhile again. Of course soon I found one that I liked more than the others and I planned to go to Isan, a rural province of Thailand, to meet her. What a wonderful trip that was..... Except; I was soon to discover what a difference there is between the Thai bargirl and the traditional Isan lady. Driven by the bright lights and relatively easy money of the bars in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Hua Hin & Pattaya a Thai girl will quickly learn to be an opportunist who gets to know how to play the game with Western men desperate to find nubile female company at low cost. The girls certainly give good service and it's cheap too. You can literally window-shop and even try the goods before you buy. But, when the time you've paid for is over don't expect a lasting relationship even if she says she will be your girlfriend. All that means to her is that she'll visit you every day before she goes back to the bar at 5pm or after she finishes about 2am, but you'll be paying cash for it. The constant text messages and calls she receives while she is with you are the give-away. She probably has another two like you waiting for her and definitely a Thai boyfriend or husband somewhere. The Thai connection is often there but she will never admit it. If casual sex and variety is what you want then it's the best, in-your-face, anything goes, rocks-off holiday you could have!

My education was yet to be completed. After my disappointment of half a dozen bargirls I was introduced to Eill by her sister. Eill's sister, Ling was around 25 years old and I had met her in a bar I used in Pattaya during a couple of visits. This bar always had girls I fancied but for some reason I never asked Ling to be my girlfriend that night. I often bought her drinks (which is what the girls are primarily there for) and so we were able to spend much time in the bar chatting. Ling has really good English and we had many conversations about Thai/UK relationships. She taught me a lot about the reasons why Thai girls work in bars and their view of Western men which is better than you might think! She also explained about the ties back to their traditions that mean their priority is sending money back to their family in the home village and not necessarily finding a wealthy husband. On this occasion her sister Eill was coming to Pattaya on a week's holiday from her job in a washing machine factory in Bangkok. She told me that Eill did not like the bar scene and was working to raise money for her dependant, extended family in traditional ways. She was looking forward to a week off work and staying with her sister. Nok said that she would arrange for me to meet her as she understood from me that I wanted a permanent relationship with a reliable Thai girl. Eill was 28 and turned out to be the sweetest girl that I had ever met. Her English was good enough for us to chat and before long we were getting to understand each other well. We could tell from the start that we had a lot to offer each other. As I had my doubts about the honesty of Eill's situation I offered to travel with Eill back to her place of work at the end of her week in Pattaya. Sure enough everything I was told turned out to be true. She worked at a Toshiba factory and was sharing a small flat with a work-mate. I had to return to the UK then but we agreed we would stay in touch and I would visit her again as soon as my work allowed. I soon returned and this time we went to meet her parents in her home village near Udon Thani. Her sister Ling was there too. I stopped Eill working at the factory and supported her so she could stay with her parents. One year after we met, we are now married and waiting for her UK Settlement Visa to be approved. Before we married in Thailand I learnt about Thai tradition and culture from Eill and her family. You don't learn that from bargirls and you don't get the adulation from her family and friends if she sleeps with you for 1000baht!

Because of my initial experiences with Thai bargirls I was aware what to look out for if I had suspicions of her loyalty. It has been encouraging that her phone rarely rings (normally her Mother); she gets very few text messages and a guy knows if his girl has not had much experience with men before! My friends and family don't have the experience I now have of travelling to Thailand a few times and getting to know the enormous differences between the bargirl and the traditional Thai Lady.

So as soon as you understand the cultural differences then the acceptability of you having a Thai wife is a problem that mainly middle-aged, UK women have. Not you. You are not breaking any laws in any country. Once you are involved you will gain the understanding that I have and you will meet a whole new group of friends in Thailand and in UK. There are support websites in UK where you can meet similar couples. There are now supermarkets that sell Thai food ingredients (a Thai Lady will be a good cook). Also the help and advice from IsanLove is always there. Your Thai wife, if she comes from a traditional Thai background, wants to please her husband. She is prepared to give you everything once you have committed to her but you have to do your bit. Make sure she understands that you are serious and want to make her happy. I have genuinely found true happiness with Eill. I am her priority, not 'the big house' or a 'new car every year' or 'going shopping with the girls'. We have a mutually loving relationship and I want to please her. It would be easy to take advantage of her dedication to me but in fact she makes me want to please her and ensure she is happy too. Where we live or what we drive doesn't matter as much anymore. Imagine that; a satisfying relationship; love like it used to be.

Be the envy of your friends; marry a beautiful, loving, adoring, satisfying, traditional Thai Lady!