

Bangkok Girl

British Expat eating, drinking and exploring
my way around Bangkok



Bangkok Voices: Being A Mommy In Bangkok

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Bangkok can be a pretty tough city to live in on your own, let alone moving your family here. So how is it being a mommy here?

Meet Becky:



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“Bangkok.....It’s been a wild ride

That really about sums it up. From the time we were asked to move until now, life has been flying at us at 100mph and I believe we have learned how to flow with it pretty well.

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Annnnnnnnaaaaaahhhhh

I am a southern girl, well sort of... I was born in New Jersey and my family moved to South Carolina when I was 4 and I have been there ever since. I grew up in a small town, went to a small school, met the love of my life in kindergarten (but had no clue he was "the one" since at the time he had major boy koodies), went to college in the same town I grew up in to stay at home to help with the family business, got married, and then moved to a different part of the state for my husband's job, which ultimately brought us to Bangkok.

We had our quiet little life in Greenville, South Carolina and we loved it. We were happy there. I was getting my Masters in Public Administration, Chris had a great job, life was good and then we (unknowingly) threw a baby into the mix and that will change things quickly.



We had our son and not three days later I was taking my final exam to finish up a class for the summer session for my Master's degree (yes I am super mom... or it was the pain medicine that "helped" me through that). About four months later during the fall semester, I was working on another exam. My baby was asleep, my husband was making dinner, and as I finished my exam I closed my computer and let out a sigh of relief. My husband set dinner on the table and poured me a drink, what a good man I thought. I remember it as if it were yesterday; as we sat together at the dinner table, he looks at me and says "You know how I mentioned a while back that work had asked if I was interested in moving to Bangkok?" I wasn't sure where he was going with this and I answer "Yes... Why?" He smiles and says "Well I was picked for the job and we are moving!" My jaw drops and I freak out (just a little bit). "What? I said it was ok to put your name in the hat because I didn't think we would get picked!? You have got to be kidding!"

I had to walk away for a moment. I needed to regroup. I thought to myself, 'We have a newborn. I am about to finish my Masters! What is happening!? I have a job that I love! Bangkok?! Like the Hangover 2 movie!? No way!'

After a few moments of praying and trying to calm down, I return to the table and thank my

husband for at the very least waiting to drop this bomb on me after I had finished my exam and told him that I will support him and would move to Bangkok.

We arrived in January 2013; Chris started work two days after we landed and I started the process of acclimating to my new role of stay at home mom (also known as SHAM) and trying to make new friends. Luckily for me, I am an extreme extrovert and I will talk to anyone who can speak English so making friends comes naturally but the stay at home mom part...not so much.

This was by far the hardest job I had ever had. I started to have an entirely new level of respect for stay at home moms. Life was hard on my son, he wasn't adjusting very well. He had stopped all speech, he wouldn't make eye contact, he would line up his toys in a nice neat row and if they were moved he would have a meltdown, and with all of the playdates and activities to keep him busy to try and help him adapt to our new environment it didn't seem to make any difference. My mommy intuition told me that something wasn't quite right but then again maybe he is just trying to make sense of everything. He hears many different languages during the day, Thai people are always coming up to him and touching him which he hates, it's super hot outside, he was taken away from everything he knew; I am sure he will get better.



As the months passed, the meltdowns and tantrums got worse. It was so bad; I couldn't even manage him at playgroups. He was out of his mind. I couldn't take it any more so when we went home to South Carolina to visit our family I took him to his regular pediatrician. We started filling out a check list to see if his development was on track. I started checking "no" to a lot of the boxes and began to worry. **This check sheet would be the beginning of a very long and hard journey for us all.** His doctor told me "It doesn't look good but it's possible he is trying to adjust. When you get back to Bangkok take him to a speech therapist."

As soon as we land in Bangkok, the next day I make an appointment with a speech therapist and after being in her office for maybe 15 minutes she recommends we have him sent for an autism evaluation. All I can squeak out is "Autism? You think my son is autistic?" Tears roll down my face. I look at my son; I look at my husband and can't

believe what is happening.

We were about to take off on a three week adventure to France, so we scheduled the appointment for when we returned. As soon as we got back, we met with the autism specialist at the hospital. This “doctor” spoke to my son in Thai and was surprised why he wasn’t responsive (Are you kidding me!? He barely speaks English that’s why he doesn’t care what you are saying in Thai!). She completed her evaluation in 30 minutes and looked at us and said “He has delays but you can deal with this at home on your own” and sent us on our way.

I am beyond frustrated. How can I deal with this at home!? I have been failing miserably at home. Our home is a place of total chaos and meltdowns and mommy is about to lose her freaking mind! I tried to handle it at home for about a month and decided there was no shame in admitting there is a problem. I went out looking for professional help but not from the Thai doctors in the hospital, who clearly didn’t have the time or desire to help us.

I found the Reed Institute, on Sukhumvit Soi 38, by talking with another expat mom. I made an appointment right away. The Director, Ali Khakpoor met with us and we made the decision to start the evaluation process. The same evaluation done in the hospital that took that “doctor” thirty minutes took two weeks at Reed. After the evaluation, we discovered my son did have developmental delays in the areas of speech and social development. At the same time as we are starting his therapy, I had my second miscarriage but I had to deal with that in the quiet of my own heart and mind because I was so busy learning how I was to help continue the therapy session at home to help my son grow.

A year and a half has gone by since we started this crazy journey in the ‘Land of Smiles’ and my family has had its shares of ups and downs, with our most recent being our third miscarriage that happened just a month ago. Although, there is pain in life there is also so much beauty, hope and love. We have been working tirelessly with Ali and the staff at Reed, and I am happy to report, over a year later, my son shows almost no signs of social delays (he is actually quite a flirt with the ladies) and his speech is coming along so well he can put three words together to make a sentence. His progress is amazing; there are no more fights because he can’t get his point across, no more out of control meltdowns, and we can actually go to the park and not cause a scene.

Becoming an expat has been a wild ride. Bangkok makes it even more so with its diverse culture and the hustle and bustle of the big city, something we aren’t used to in South Carolina. It has been an adventure of a lifetime but not in the way I had originally thought. Yes it’s been amazing in the sense that we are on the other side of the world experiencing new cultures and traveling to places we never fathomed but this has turned into a family adventure on an entirely different scale. One that provided the opportunity for my son to get the help he needed and one that brought us closer together as a family through the hardships and losses. My husband with his many pearls of wisdom will remind me when I start to think life is hard and being away from our family and friends seems rough; he will say “We can pretty much survive anything as long as we stick together. Look at all we

have been through together so far.”

Bangkok is my home. I love everything about it and every opportunity it presents. We are beyond blessed to be here. God is good.”

Thank you Becky – I read your story so many times before posting it and each time I shed a little tear – your family is amazing. Moving to Bangkok certainly changes you in more ways than you can ever imagine.

If you want to read more of Becky’s stories check out her amazing blog [From Palmetto Pride To Pad Thai](#) or follow her on twitter <https://twitter.com/BeckyHorace>

If you have an interesting experience of Bangkok that you would like to share, or just want to share your favourite bar or restaurant then please email me on bangkokgirlblog@yahoo.com

6 Comments so far. Feel free to join this conversation.



Goodisongirl

August 22, 2014 at 10:12 am - Reply

Hi Becky

What a tough time you and your family have been through. I was very moved by your blog post and am sending best wishes to you all. I have heard great things about the Reed Institute and the work they do! Xx



Sonja

August 22, 2014 at 11:30 am - Reply

Thanks for sharing this very personal piece of your life with us. You are a super strong person and a wonderful mother, that is what I can read here. xxx



Amy @ Toothbrush Travels

August 22, 2014 at 3:21 pm - Reply

So sorry to hear about your difficult journey Becky, it’s true what they say that family can get you through anything and you have built the most beautiful unit xx



Courtney Bentley

August 22, 2014 at 4:29 pm - Reply

Becky, you are one tough mommy and you have shown me that sticking through even the toughest of times makes you a stronger person and bonds you with your family and friends! All my love to you xo C



Kylie

August 23, 2014 at 1:22 am - Reply

Thanks for sharing Becky's story!



Alison

August 23, 2014 at 4:20 pm - Reply

This was so interesting to read and so well written. I often wonder what it would be like living in a foreign country when things don't quite go to plan. So glad you found the right place to help your son.

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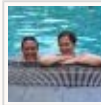
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About Me



My name is Anna and I am a British expat living in Bangkok. This blog is about my Bangkok experiences: eating, drinking, shopping, sightseeing and being an expat in general, together with any trips I am lucky enough to make around the rest of Thailand and SE Asia. Please feel free to send me an email: bangkokgirlblog@yahoo.com

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