

**a. How were you addressed when you entered the restaurant? Did you need to make reservations? How long was the wait before you were seated?**

The restaurant I went to was Thai Farm Kitchen, 416 Church Avenue in Brooklyn. My cousin and I were immediately greeted with a wai, a form of a Thai greeting, when we entered the restaurant. “A wai is a form of communication and a customary greeting in Thailand where palms of the hands are briefly pressed together in a prayer-like gesture with fingers pointing upwards, usually close to the chest, and the head slightly bowed. The wai is a sign of respect and is used instead of the traditional Western handshake or a wave. It can be a way of saying thanks, showing understanding of a person or situation, or a polite way to apologize” (Willan, 2018). This gives an example of how Thai culture is *high context* because the waitress used nonverbal communication to greet and welcome us. The waitress was very friendly and welcoming, greeting us with a huge smile. I did not have to make a reservation. There was no wait, we were seated immediately.

**b. What are the cultural differences you notice? Using your five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell, & sound describe some of the cultural differences that you are not accustomed to in comparison to All-American restaurant or restaurant chains. For example, one can describe but not limited to the sights in the restaurant décor, odors from unusual foods, and sounds from music. One should use all five-senses in this cultural experience.**

The decor is really thought through. Above me was a traditional fish net that decorated the ceiling, along with a chicken cage repurposed into a lampshade. The restaurant had a very intimate and cozy setting, with tables right next to each other, tight and compact. “The general space between two people conversing is an arm’s length, not 2 feet how Americans usually prefer.. When in conversation with a friend or close acquaintance, this distance is shorter” (Evason, 2016). *Space* in Thailand isn’t a big deal how we make it here where we don’t want anyone near us most of the time. The restaurant had everyone very close, which was something different because I’ve never been in that setting when going out to eat. Appetizing in its descriptions, the food was even better than expected when it arrived. The “farm” in its name is not just advertising. I could taste the freshness in the sauces, the vegetables, and, even the meat itself. One thing I noticed upon entering the restaurant was the aroma, it didn’t have that greasy smell that I’d normally smell in All American restaurant chains. The aroma smelled more fresh, with traces of fresh vegetables, soy sauce, sesame, and spices that’s not normally used in All American restaurants. Also, there was very soft, almost faint music playing throughout, where normally at American restaurants or restaurant chains, the music consists of any genre whether it be rock or hip hop and loud. I was given gold utensils which are never offered at American restaurants. The touches of gold made the restaurant feel more authentic because Thailand has traces of gold decor everywhere. “The significance of different materials is incredibly important in Buddhist culture, and none more so than gold. Gold is not only a major noticeable decoration in Thailand but across all Buddhist nations” (R, 2018). There were also giant gold dragons outside of the restaurant so gold was incorporated throughout.

- c. Look at the menu. What are the types of foods they offer? What are some unusual items? Do they describe the ingredients in the food? List various food items from the menu. What menu items did you order? Is there more than one language used to describe the foods on the menu?**

Many curry dishes, vegetable dishes, seafood dishes, meat, noodles, soups, and rice dishes are offered. There was a section of the menu specifically for vegan-gluten free dishes. Each menu item had very appetizing descriptions and listed the ingredients. Next to each food item, was a translation right across in Thai. Also, one thing I noticed was on each page, the restaurant advertised that their organic products come from their professional organic farmers and ingredients come from Thailand. Food items include “Pad Phuk Ruam” a stir fry mix of organic vegetables, Vegan pineapple fried rice, chicken dumplings, “Khao Soi” egg noodle curry, “Pad Krapow” basil chicken or ground pork with vegetables and fried egg. For my starter, I opted with Gai Satay, which was chicken skewers marinated with spices and lemongrass, with a side of peanut sauce. My main dish was Pad See Ew which is stir fried soy sauce noodles with chinese broccoli and egg. The description stated that it is an extremely popular Thai street food and probably the most popular noodle dish of Thailand. I chose shrimp over the other option, chicken. To wash the delicious food down, I ordered a Thai Iced Tea which was very refreshing and the perfect amount of sweet.

- d. Is a traditional salad offered? If not, describe what is offered. What types of breads are offered (flat, pita, tortilla chips)? What type of desserts (cheesecake, fortune cookie, coffee)? What are they like?**

Traditional salad was not offered. There was a sour green papaya salad filled with long beans, thai chili, lime juice, and crushed peanut. Another salad offered was the green mango salad filled with peanut, fresh herbs, thai chili, shallots, and avocado. Lastly, a meat salad with fish sauce, chili flakes, lime juice, and toasted rice with fresh herbs. No type of bread was offered. Desserts included a mango and butterfly pea sticky rice with sesame. The other dessert was sticky rice flour with taro and pumpkin in coconut milk and sesame. Two of which desserts I did not get because I was very full!

- e. What types of beverages are offered? Do they have an alcohol menu? What is not typically offered in an American chain restaurant?**

Basic drinks like Pepsi and Sprite were offered. There was also Iced Thai Tea, Iced coffee, and what they described as Herbal drinks. The herbal drinks included iced chrysanthemum tea, as well as hot, and hot butterfly pea tea as well as iced. None of the items besides the basic sodas and iced coffee are typically offered in an American chain restaurant. There is no alcohol menu. I actually asked the

waitress why there wasn't alcohol out of curiosity but it wasn't for any specific reason except they do not have a liquor license at the moment.

- f. How is the food reflective of the cultural geography and the economic geography? (i.e. spices are abundant in India which is rich in spices & fish (sushi) is popular in Japan & it is part of the G8). Describe approximately where in the world (continent & location) and from country this culture's food is best known.**

"Thai cuisine is also heavily influenced by Indian spices and flavors, which is evident in its famous green, red, and yellow curries" (Schmidt, 2019). Thailand and India are near each other and curry is very popular in India. Thailand being a destination for multiple tropical islands, seafood is undoubtedly the most prevailing platter all across Thailand. There were a lot of seafood dishes. An ingredient that I've seen in many dishes was galangal. "Galangal, another well known Thai spice comes from the family of ginger and is similar to turmeric. This spice is abundant in Thailand." Some of the soups had coconut, as well as some of the dishes. "Coconuts are abundant and are used to thicken and flavour curries and soups, as well as being grated as a garnish, with the oil used to fry dishes" (Wines, 2019). Thai food's cuisine consists of a lot of their own resources but are also influenced by neighbors.

- g. Describe the dress? (Dress is inclusive of all five senses – you smell perfume, hear jewelry, see make-up, etc....) What are the employees, such as hostesses or wait staff wearing?**

The dress of all the staff was very minimal. Females had little to no makeup with their hair tied back. There were no hair accessories of the sort. They all wore all black, with black sneakers. I did not see anyone with dress shoes. Their pop of color came from the red aprons they had on over their clothing. I did not smell any perfume and if they had jewelry, it wasn't overwhelming. No loud bangles or big hoop earrings. I only saw one male staff member when I was there, who was very minimal as well wearing all black. He didn't have hair covering his face and didn't have accessories or cologne on. Overall, the dress of all the employees was very laid back and simple, almost giving an even cozier feel to the restaurant.

- h. Rate your experience as a food critic (as in the *LA Times* or *Houston Chronicle*). Ratings should be dependent on taste, service, décor, cleanliness, authenticity, quality and price and should range from A-F ("A" being the best). Explain why you chose this rating. Be thorough and detailed in your explanations.**

I rate my experience an A. I was able to see the food being cooked because the kitchen was adjacent to where the seating area was. I enjoyed that because it felt like I was eating right at home. Also, the presentation of the food was excellent. From the silver ornate cups to the unique gold

silverware, my starter was served on a wooden board and my entree was served on a banana leaf. The taste of the food was very rich with spices but also had sauces on the side that were sweet so it was a nice balance. Thailand's cuisine is known to be flavorful, either giving sweet, sour, spicy, or curried. The flavors of my dish tasted like authentic Thai food and I love that the restaurant actually imports their ingredients from Thailand. The vegetables were very fresh and had a nice texture because they were super crunchy which I liked. The service was excellent. The staff always had smiles on their faces and made me feel very welcomed. "Thai people are generally polite and friendly, so smiling is important. The concept of "face" is important in Thailand" (Guide to Thailand: Thai Etiquette, Customs & Culture, 2020). This is another example of *high context culture*. They were also very polite and always came by to refill water, and ask us if we needed anything else. They were very attentive and the food also came out quick which was a plus. The quality of the food was worth the price. The price was what I expected, especially for Thai food because Thai food usually is a bit on the expensive side. The restaurant was very clean and the staff was wearing gloves. The tables were clean when I sat down, I have no complaints. I also noticed that the restaurant did have an A rating on their door.

**i. What did you learn from this experience that you could contribute to a multi-cultural experience in a class discussion?**

Thailand has high context culture and going to the restaurant proved it by the way the staff interacted with me. I also learned how to say Thank you in Thai, *khàawp-khun*, because towards the end of our meal, the waitress taught us and did the *wai* gesture. Being that I did a lot of research upon writing the paper, I also learned of other facts about Thailand.

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## STARTER

### **"THAI SALAD"** Organic Veggies topped with peanut sauce

Cucumber, cherry tomato, carrot lettuce topped with peanut sauce.

or

### **"POH PIATHOD"** Deep fried vegetarian spring rolls

Deep fried Organic cabbage n tofu, glass noodles, carrots, Kale wrap with Spring roll sheet

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## SOUP Choices

### **"TOM KHA KAI"** Chicken in Coconut Soup

Stalks of lemongrass and galangal, mushroom, onion, bell pepper and tender strips of chicken

or

### **"TOM JERD KHAI NAM"** Chicken-Meat Ball Soup

Minced chicken-meat ball mixed with glass noodles, napa cabbage, baby bok choy and Farm fresh fried egg

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## MAIN DISH Choices

### **"THAI FARM KITCHEN PHAD THAI"**

Stir fried rice noodle with Chef original pad Thai sauce with shrimp, brown tofu, peanut, bean sprout, farm fresh egg tossed in tamarind glaze and topped with crispy calamari

or

### **"PAD SEE EW"** Stir fried soy sauce noodles

Popular noodle dish of Thailand.

Stirfried soy sauce flat rice noodleswithChinese broccoli and egg.

or

### **"PAD KEE MAO"** Drunken Noodle fried soy sauce noodles

Stir fried spicy flat rice noodle with bell pepper, onion, Chinese broccoli and basil

or

### **"PAD KRAPOW"** Basil chicken or ground pork

Thai comfort street food with holy basil, fresh basil, Thai chili, organic bell peppers, topped with farm fresh fried egg

or

### **"POWER GREEN CURRY CHICKEN"** Green curry

Cooked with long beans, green baby Thai eggplant, bamboo shoot, bell pepper and fresh basil leaves

or

### **"PAD PHED PLA"** Stir fried catfish in curry

Stir fried cut catfish, basil leaves, bell pepper, lime leaves, kachai herb and young pepper corn

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## DESSERT

### **"KANOM WHAAN"** Dessert of the day

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