

# Unfamiliar culture: eat thai

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Unfamiliar Culture BY YOU YOUR SCHOOL INFO HERE HERE After having visited Eat Thai, a modern yet unusual Thai food restaurant on the streets of St. Christopher's Place, there was considerable culture shock occurring that stemmed from service attitude, food variety, and patronage of the business. Firstly, the diners in the business were self-proclaimed trendy individuals, befitting the profile of the American-like yuppie, fashionable and audacious patrons that enjoyed having their voices heard and making a spectacle of their dining experience. For instance, these youths continued to express their dissatisfaction with food quality and service quality, however they were consuming food in large quantities in an effort to show that these youths thought they were superior to others. It did not take long to realise that the servers at Eat Thai were growing quickly unimpressed with the diners' spectacle, but continued to serve products with the usual grace and decorum often found in Asian, subservient workers.

Culture shock at Eat Thai came in many forms, not just with youth diners that seemed to have no real sense of etiquette or respect. The Thai food servers interacted with one another with very polite and modest action, indicating that they felt a very strong value for power distance. Geert Hofstede described that many Asian cultures are collectivist, having very powerful beliefs in the integrity of close-knit, family-oriented relationships. However, at Eat Thai, the focus was much more on maintaining professionalism rather than expressing their inter-organisational relationship focus to illustrate to the patrons that they were collectivist cultures. This is unusual from some previous experiences at other Asian restaurants, where relationship elements were often expressive to the diners when family arguments or other dissatisfaction with the group dynamic were audible and

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apparent.

There were clearly distinctions made between Eat Thai servers and patrons, making it a bit uncomfortable in trying to enjoy the products delivered to the table. Patrons that had been drinking and indulging were emerging from a very dark and rather drab basement that had been set-up to provide food services, shouting and laughing as they searched for payment opportunities. This constant flood of patrons made it difficult to find serenity, which is something that my own personal culture prefers when having a family-oriented dining experience. Response to this culture shock included making throat-clearing noises in an effort to express dissatisfaction, however it met with very little results. For the two hours myself and my dining party were eating at Eat Thai, the constant clamour was very foreign from what our dining party was accustomed to and it quickly became clear, by measuring body language, that my dining party had grown significantly tired of this spectacle of social volume that truly eroded the dining experience. I soon realised that my own ethnic culture maintains very good manners which is why we simply allowed the bothersome social clatter to continue rather than attempting to make a display of our own dissatisfaction that would have further eroded the quality of the dining experience at this very unusual restaurant.