Zydrune (Toma to her friends) is one of thousands of expats living in Bangkok. 4 years ago for the first time she arrived at Suvarnabhumi and in this article, she shares her story on how does it feel to be expat from Lithuania in Bangkok.

I come from a small country, located in the centre of the European continent –

Lithuania. A country, that isn’t recognised or even heard of by many people in Thailand. Those that do,

consider it to be a part of Russia or even located somewhere outside of Europe.

Perhaps it’s due to our population of just 3 million (not even half that of Bangkok!) which

makes us almost non existent. The name ‘Lithuania’ itself is quite hard to

pronounce and remember. When I introduce myself, I know I’ll have to

repeat my country’s name two or three times and I’ll still see blank faces,

people digesting what I’ve said.

Being a Lithuanian in Thailand is quite unique. No one knows about

my origins, or has stereotypes about me and or understands the

language that I speak. I don’t know how many other Lithuanians that there are here in Bangkok

but, so far, I haven't met any others.

It’s an honour to me to hear people say that I am the first

Lithuanian that they have ever met (I try hard to leave a good impression!) and fascinating

to observe them Googling information about my country.

At first I was upset. Almost no one, that I met or talked to, knew anything about my

country. Whilst travelling around Thailand, people regarded me as just ‘being

Russian’.

Well, I’m not. I am a Lithuanian and I am proud to be so!

I felt strange, offended, sometimes even angry and … well, lonely. Here with no family or friends - no one that I could converse in my own language with.

’Didn’t they study geography?!’ I asked myself!

Nevertheless, my life in Thailand has never been depressing. The Thais have always been

kind and Bangkok has become my (lovely) second home which I do not want to leave.

Even on my ‘*pyjama days*’ people smiled and called me beautiful.

I’ve never

received so many compliments in my life! Living in such a positive environment, and being different, (I am tall (xcms?), slim and have long blonde hair)

has boosted my self-esteem like never before. I have become more confident about my

presence and now wear less makeup. People here are more open

minded and judge you less about, for instance, fashion style and hair colour then back

home.

Thais and in particular Bangkokians (as they are who I have mainly experienced) truly welcome everyone with warmth. There have been situations

when a motorbike taxi driver has offered me fresh mango, local food vendors give

an extra topping for free or a generous discount. I have lived countless beautiful

moments some of which how made me a better person. The capital city of Thailand is the

city where east meets west and there is no issues about it. It is well named as ‘the city of angels’. It doesn’t matter

where you come from or where you are going. If you’re a nice person, the locals will treat you the same.

However, I miss nature and the seasonal changes. Autumn, winter, spring, summer … all

of the Lithuanian cities are spacious and filled with constantly changing greenery. We’re

huge nature lovers too. It’s only during the cold seasons that we end up hanging out in

shopping malls, otherwise it’s berry picking, cycling, camping, swimming in a river

and gardening that are the favourite activities of the Lithuanians. Tourists

often remark that our cities are the greenest that they have ever seen. We don’t have many

warm days like Thailand and it rains frequently; therefore when the sun does shine we make the most of it.

In Bangkok the lifestyle is different. Here people are more likely to spend days

indoors as outside it is very hot and when it rains it only lasts for a short while. Sure,

Bangkok has many large and well maintained parks filled with birds, turtles, fish,

and even monitor lizards, however the ambience of nature isn’t the same. Tropical flora and fauna proliferates everywhere in the humid heat.

No matter how much I enjoy my life here, I often find myself longing for breezy

summer nights, eating homegrown strawberries, and swimming in a river.

That’s how it feels to be Lithuanian in Bangkok: very happy but yearning for the

fresh and green nature back home. Well, at least that’s how I feel.

I hope that some of you will visit my country one day and understand.