

# BIRTH CONTROL AND DINING OUT



Thai Minister of Health.

Foreign visitors may be a bit surprised in Thailand when they learn about the Cabbages and Condoms Restaurants. The name says it all – it is a restaurant that offers meals as well as condoms. The whole idea came from a non profit Population and Community Development Association that promotes birth control. The organization was founded in 1974 by Mechai Viravaidya, the former

The restaurants have become popular in Thailand for its delicious cuisine and reasonable prices. The Bangkok Cabbages and Condoms Restaurant is situated near one of Bangkok's main business districts, repeatedly rated as one of the best restaurants in Bangkok. It is very popular among the locals as well as tourists. The complex includes not only the restaurant but also nearby parking, which is a rare commodity in Bangkok.

Within the complex a guest may find a bar, an Internet cafe and a massage shop. In a handicraft shop jointly operated with Oxfam, visitors may buy various souvenirs. Among those are for example carved wooden figurines or woven silk made in villages. The store profits go back to the villagers. The shop also sells T-shirts with a sign “Our food is guaranteed not to cause pregnancy”.

There are 5 of these restaurants located around Thailand. Their goal is to promote birth control and family planning. All diners get a condom with coffee, instead of an after-dinner mint. The Bangkok “Cabbages and Condoms” restaurant also possesses the world’s largest national brand condoms collection. Cabbage is a widely spread dish in Thailand and the idea of the Population and Community Development Association is to make condoms as usual as cabbages for Thai people. It is also important to mention that the restaurants raise funds for the association.

This Cabbages and Condoms business is, nevertheless, not the only activity performed by the former minister. He for example paid farmers to paint condom ads on the sides of their water buffalos. So far the Thailand’s birth rate has dropped below 1 percent a year.

Good idea? Or not? Add your comments.

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