

To quiche or not to quiche

I'd been on this rock seven months and decided to make a quiche for dinner. So, while I was in town, the capital city I might add, I popped into one of the many supermarkets in the hope of finding frozen puff pastry. From past experience I knew this would be akin to going on a treasure hunt.

It was a bright sunny day and a foreign cruise ship of maybe fourteen floors above the waterline was in port towering over the waterfront bus stand and shops.

I remembered my first time setting foot in this country off a cruise ship. We had docked in three ports four years previously and each day's stop over brought a different experience of the country. To the west, it was manufactured, man-made constructions and priced to empty the pockets of tourists. Here in the capital it was a bustle of fending off hawkers and dodging street marches and finding thought-to-be-extinct foods from my childhood. To the south, it was one village on one island, no roads, 100 people and crushed coral beaches made to laze on and to snorkel off.

I had been here long enough to know the perils of living here. Taxi drivers who own the road, buses that pull up in the middle of the road, a wrangle of one way streets that send you in circles back to where you started. Walking through town was hot and steamy and being a Saturday, everyone was in town. That was the highlight of the week with the place being deserted on Sundays while everyone was in church.

I needed puff pastry and a dozen eggs. I asked a store attendant.

Do you have puff pastry and where are the eggs?

Instead of getting an answer, I got a question. This is normal. The other normal thing is getting an answer that in no way can fit the question asked.

Are you from the cruise ship?

Time stood still as I processed that question. How did that question come out of his mouth? How many cruise ships pull into a port so the passengers can buy a dozen eggs and puff pastry? Does he think this is why the ship has docked so everyone on board can go and do their grocery shopping? Does he have no concept of how cruise liners work? Does he think they are floating apartment buildings? Does he think I am the chef on board and I've run short of supplies to feed the 1000 plus passengers and 1200 staff? And a dozen eggs and a roll of frozen puff pastry is going to cut it?

My mind whirled trying to grasp his logic.

No I am not.

I brought him back to my original request. They had neither in stock.

I walked out of there resolving that the grocery shop was fully stocked with some kind of stupid but had little on the food frontier for my needs.

As a footnote, three grocery stores later, about 5 km away I found the puff pastry and quiche was had for dinner. I wondered what was on the menu on the cruise ship as she sailed out of port?