

Thai Values: The Heart of Thainess

Photo credit: Thailand Elite Visas



Thailand in Brief

"**Thailand in Brief**" has been prepared by the Thailand Foundation to support students, scholars, and the general public who wish to give presentations about Thailand to their audiences—for example, exchange program students and international participants.

The work presents some basic information about Thailand in 11 areas: ***1) Geography, 2) History, 3) Politics and Government, 4) Economics, 5) Demographics, 6) Culture, 7) Values, 8) Thai People and Other Popularity That You May Know, 9) Misconceptions about Thailand, 10) Thailand's Role on the Global Stage, and 11) Rankings Related to Thailand.***

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Thailand in Brief

"Thailand in Brief" จัดทำขึ้นโดยมูลนิธิไทย (Thailand Foundation) เพื่ออำนวยความสะดวกแก่ นักเรียน นักศึกษา และผู้สนใจทั่วไป นำไปใช้ประโยชน์ อาทิ ในการบรรยาย หรือให้ความรู้เกี่ยวกับประเทศไทยในด้านต่าง ๆ แก่ชาวต่างประเทศ เช่น กรณีนักศึกษาแลกเปลี่ยนที่ไปเรียนในต่างประเทศ ที่ต้องนำเสนอเรื่องราวเกี่ยวกับประเทศไทยในสถาบันที่ไปศึกษาอยู่ เป็นต้น

งานชิ้นนี้เสนอข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับประเทศไทยโดยสังเขป 11 ด้าน ได้แก่ **1) ภูมิศาสตร์** (Geography) **2) ประวัติศาสตร์** (History) **3) การเมืองการปกครอง** (Politics and Government) **4) เศรษฐกิจ** (Economics) **5) ประชากร** (Demographics) **6) วัฒนธรรม** (Culture) **7) ค่านิยม** (Values) **8) คนไทยและสื่อที่คุณอาจรู้จัก** (Thai people and other popularity that you may know) **9) ความเข้าใจผิดเกี่ยวกับประเทศไทย** (Misconceptions) **10) บทบาทของไทยในเวทีโลก** (Thailand's role on the Global Stage) และ **11) การจัดอันดับที่เกี่ยวกับประเทศไทย** (Rankings related to Thailand)

"Thailand in Brief" นี้จัดทำเป็นสไลด์ จำนวน xx สไลด์ ในรูปแบบ .pdf และ .pptx สามารถดาวน์โหลดและเลือกใช้หัวข้อที่นำเสนอ และสลับลำดับการนำเสนอได้ตามความเหมาะสม อย่างไรก็ดี ผู้ใช้งานไม่สามารถดัดแปลงเนื้อหาในเอกสารได้ และห้ามผลิตซ้ำ หรือนำไปใช้เพื่อผลประโยชน์เชิงพาณิชย์ โดยไม่ได้รับอนุญาตจากมูลนิธิไทย

"Thailand in Brief" จะได้รับการปรับปรุงให้ทันสมัยในทุกไตรมาสที่ 3 ของปี หากมีข้อสงสัยและข้อเสนอแนะเพิ่มเติม กรุณาติดต่อมูลนิธิไทย อีเมล info@thailandfoundation.or.th

1. Respect

In Thai culture, respect is a core value deeply embedded in everyday life. Thai people show respect not only toward themselves and others, but also to places, religious objects, and spiritual forces. Respect is expressed through actions like the **wai** (ไหว้), polite speech, and mindful behavior, reflecting a deep sense of social harmony.

Photo credit: Dek-D



Seniority

Seniority plays an important role in Thai culture, where elders or those of higher seniority, such as teachers, are respected for their age and experience. While younger people show deference, elders or seniors are expected to offer care and guidance in return—making respect a reciprocal and valued part of Thai society.

Photo credit: mjulibrary



How Seniority is Expressed

- **Language & Titles:**

- Use of familial terms even outside family (e.g., ***Phee*** (พี่) for older, ***Nong*** (น้อง) for younger).
- These reflect warmth, respect, and social connectedness.

- **Body Language:**

- Bowing when passing elders.
- Using the ***wai*** gesture with appropriate level based on the other person's status.

- **Rituals & Traditions:**

- ***Rod Nam Dam Hua*** (รดน้ำดำหัว): A Songkran tradition where younger people pour water over elders' hands to show respect and receive blessings.

Photo credit: thaihealth.or.th





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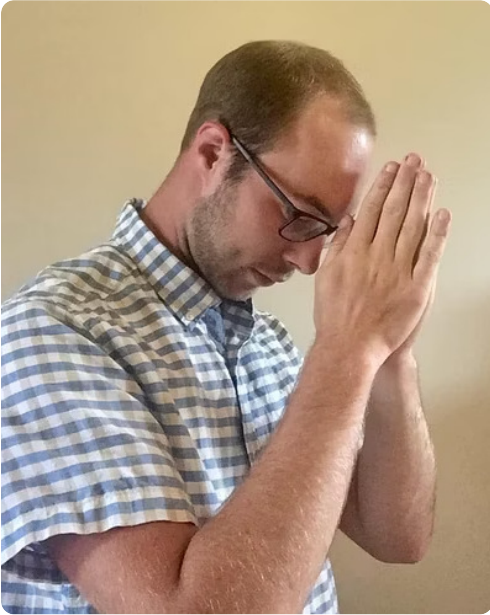
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Wai – Thai Gesture of Respect

- **Wai (ไหว้)** is the traditional Thai gesture for greeting, gratitude, and reverence.
- Used for various purposes:
 - Greeting others
 - Showing respect
 - Expressing worship or prayer
 - Apologizing

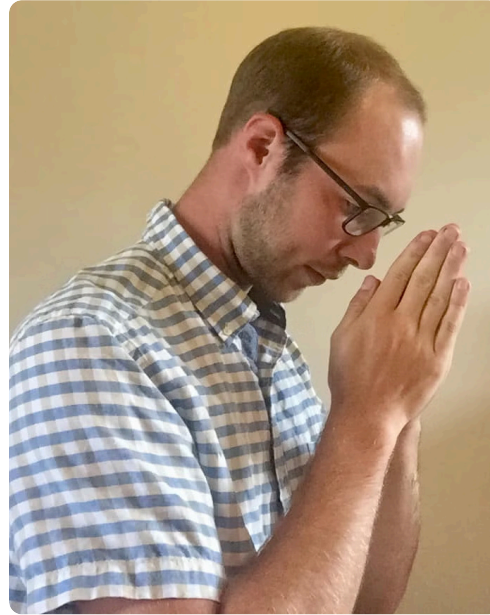
Photo credit: Pinterest

Levels of Wai



Thumbs between the eyebrows

For worship, prayer, and paying respect to monks/religious figures



Thumbs at the tip of the nose

For elders, seniors, teachers, and respected individuals



Thumbs at the tip of the chin

For friends, younger people, or people of social standing

Photo credit: Facebook: Thai Culture to the World

Wai in Rituals

- "**Wai**" also extends to the attitude of respect that can be expressed in traditions like **Wai Khru** – a ceremony where students express gratitude toward their teachers for giving them knowledge.

Photo credit: Bangrakamwittayasuksa School



Head & Feet



The Head

The most sacred part of the body

- Do not touch someone's head without permission.



The Feet

The lowest part of the body

- Do not point feet at others or sacred objects (e.g., Buddha statues).
- Remove shoes before entering homes or sacred areas' temples.
- Avoid placing respected objects like books on the floor.

Temple Etiquette



Dress Modestly

Cover shoulders & knees.



Remove Shoes

Before entering sacred areas.



No PDA

Avoid public displays of affection.



Speak Softly

Avoid loud talking & laughing.



Sit Properly

Legs tucked to the side or cross-legged.



Mind Your Feet

Don't point them at Buddha statues or monks.



Avoid Touching Monks

Especially for women.



Compassion & Generosity

Rooted in Buddhist teachings, compassion is an important aspect of Thai social values, fostering kindness, empathy, and harmonious relationships within communities.

Photo credit: Freepik



***Tum Boon* – Making Merit**

- A core **Buddhist practice** to gain **good karma**.
- Common ways to make merit:
 - Giving alms to monks
 - Donating to temples and the needy
 - Helping the poor
 - Releasing animals such as birds, fishes, etc.

Merit-making on Special Occasions

- Birthdays, weddings, funerals, etc.
- Many Thais make merit **daily**, such as praying before bed.

Photo credit :Sanook



Openness & Diversity

Thai people have an attitude of cultural openness, embracing diversity in ways that reflect its rich traditions and evolving modernity. Thai society fosters a welcoming atmosphere for different beliefs, lifestyles, and identities.

Photo credit: Clever Thai

Cultural Diversity

Thailand's cultural diversity is a vibrant tapestry of ethnic groups, traditions, beliefs, and lifestyles. This openness has shaped a society where different identities not only coexist harmoniously, but also blend into a unique Thai identity.

Photo credit: Noppakraw





Religions

Thailand is known for its religious tolerance, with the Buddhist majority population living harmoniously alongside Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and other religious communities, fostering a culture of mutual respect and inclusivity.

Photo credit: Clever Thai



LGBTQ+

- o Thailand is widely regarded as one of the most LGBTQ+ friendly countries in Asia, with visible representation and acceptance in the media and everyday life.
- o Thailand is the first country in Southeast Asia to legalize same-sex marriage in 2024.

Photo credit: The Standard

Old and New

In Thailand, traditional culture thrives alongside modernity, with ancient temples standing proudly amidst skyscrapers and bustling cityscapes. The seamless integration of age-old customs with contemporary lifestyles reflects the nation's adaptability and respect for its cultural heritage.

Pictured: The "Big Buddha" at Wat Paknam Phasi Charoen, Bangkok

Photo credit: MGR Online



Jai : The Heart

In Thai, "*jai*" (ใจ) means "**heart**" or "**mind**," but its meaning extends far beyond the physical organ. It represents **emotions, thoughts, and the inner self**, reflecting the importance of maintaining social harmony through being **mindful** of others' thoughts and feelings.



Jai in the Thai Language

There are countless terms in Thai that includes the word jai, but two key examples include

1 *Nam Jai* (น้ำใจ)

The value of generosity, sharing, and helping others without expecting anything in return, such as bringing back gifts for friends and loved ones when returning from trips.

2 *Kreng Jai* (เกรงใจ)

The value of being mindful against causing others discomfort.



Refinedness

La-iat orn (လေးငယ်တူဝံ့), meaning "**delicate**" or "**sensitive**," refers to the attitude of **refinement**, **intricacy**, and **attention to detail**.

Photo credit: fotoinfo.online



Social Interactions

In social setting, *la-iat orn*, can refer to being mindful to social cues and the emotions of others.



The Arts

In the realm of Thai arts, *la-iat orn* is a key focus, whereby artists place great importance on details and refinedness.