

Songkran

Want to see a giant, friendly water fight? Go to Thailand in April!

Families across the country celebrate Songkran on April 13th.

Songkran is the Buddhist New Year. Buddhism is a common religion in Thailand. The word Songkran means passage of the sun.

Songkran lasts for a few days as people welcome the new year. Families clean their houses and schools to get ready for the holiday. Relatives travel to visit each other.

During Songkran, families wake up early to go to Buddhist temples. They bring food and other offerings. They listen to the monks teach lessons.

They also sprinkle the temple statues with water. The water represents good fortune. Young people pour water on the hands of older people to show respect.

Some visitors bring sand to the temple. The sand replaces sand that was carried away on people's shoes during the year. They decorate the piles of sand with flags and flowers.

Outside of the temples, there are street parties. Families celebrate with parades and boat races. They also have a huge water fight!



People dump buckets of water on friends and relatives. They spray each other with water squirters and water balloons. Sometimes they even use elephants!

The splashing water is a symbol. It represents washing away bad luck from the past year. It also symbolizes beginning the new year with a fresh start.

Songkran is fun, if you don't mind getting wet! It is very hot in Thailand in April, so the cooling water is usually welcome. If you find yourself there, make sure to say "Sawasdee Pee Mai!"



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What does Songkran mean?
 - a. New year
 - b. Water fight
 - c. Passage of the sun
 - d. Buddhism

2. Why do young people pour water on the hands of older people?
 - a. To show respect
 - b. To represent good fortune
 - c. To clean them
 - d. To cool them off

3. Who would NOT like to celebrate Songkran?
 - a. People who are afraid of water
 - b. Thai families
 - c. Buddhist Monks
 - d. People who love elephants

4. What does “Sawasdee Pee Mai!” most likely mean?
 - a. Don’t splash me!
 - b. Here’s some food!
 - c. Welcome to Thailand!
 - d. Happy New Year!

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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