

Thailand and Thais- American

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History, Geography, Politics of Thailand

- Bordered in west and northwest by Myanmar (Burma), is south west by the Andaman Sea, in east and west by Lao People's Democratic Republic, in south east by Cambodia, in south by the Gulf of Thailand, and by Malaysia. Thailand shares also maritime borders with India, Indonesia, and Vietnam.
- Until 1939 the country was known as Siam.
- Thailand has a population of 68 million people (2015).
- Capital is Bangkok.
- Spoken language is Thai (official), and English in tourist regions.

Geography of Thailand



Politics of Thailand

- A constitutional monarchy, with the King as head of state. The Prime Minister is head of government, and he must be a member of the Parliament.
- Since its government became a constitutional monarchy in 1932, Thailand has had a total of 19 constitutions and charters, going through different types of governments such as a military dictatorship and an electoral democracy.
- All governments throughout the decades acknowledge the hereditary monarch as the government's head of state.

Language

- Language – Thai
- There are variations and dialects of the language depending on the area in which you grew up in.
- Thai alphabet – 22 consonants, 15 vowel symbols that combine at least 28 vowel forms and four tone dialects.

Language and Interpersonal Relationships

ก ไก่ ko kai (chicken) k/k [kʰk] low	ข ไข่ kho khai (egg) kh/k [kʰk] high	ช ขวด kho khwat (bottle)* kh/k [kʰk] high	ค ควาย kho khwai (water buffalo) kh/k [kʰk] low	ค คน kho khon (person)* kh/k [kʰk] low	ฆ ระฆัง kho ra-khang (bell) kh/k [kʰk] low	ง งู ngo ngu (snake) ng/ng [ŋŋ] low	จ จาน cho chan (plate) ch/t [tʰt] mid
ฉ ฉิ่ง cho ching (cymbals) ch/- [tʰ/-] high	ช ช้าง cho chang (elephant) ch/t [tʰ/-] low	ซ โซ่ so so (chain) s/t [s/t] low	ฌ เจ๊ cho choe (tree) ch/- [tʰ/-] low	ญ หญิง yo ying (woman) y/n [j/n] low	ฎ ฎา do cha-da (headdress) d/t [d/t] mid	ฏ ปลูก to pa-tak (goad) t/t [tʰt] mid	ฐ ฐาน tho than (base) th/t [tʰt] high
ท ทโมน tho montho (Mandolari) th/t [tʰt] low	ฒ ผู้เฒ่า tho phu-thao (elder) th/t [tʰt] low	ณ เณร no nen (novice monk) n/n [n/n] low	ด เด็ก do dek (child) d/t [d/t] mid	ต เต่า to tao (turtle) t/t [tʰt] mid	ถ ถุง tho thung (sack) th/t [tʰt] high	ท ทหาร tho thahan (soldier) th/t [tʰt] low	ธ ธง tho thong (flag) th/t [tʰt] low
น หนู no nu (mouse) n/n [n/n] low	บ ใบไม้ bo baimai (leaf) b/p [b/p] mid	ป ปลา po pla (fish) p/p [p/p] mid	ผ ผึ้ง pho phueng (bee) ph/- [pʰ/-] high	ฝ ฝา fo fa (lid) f/- [f/-] high	พ พาน pho phan (tray) ph/p [pʰ/p] low	ฟ ฟัน fo fan (teeth) f/p [f/p] low	ภ สำเภา pho sam-phao (sailboat) ph/p [pʰ/p] low
ม ม้า mo ma (horse) m/m [m/m] low	ย ยักษ์ yo yak (giant) y/y [j/j] low	ร เรือ ro ruea (boat) r/n [r/n] low	ล ลิง lo ling (monkey) l/n [l/n] low	ว แหวน wo waen (ring) w/w [w/w] low	ศ ศาลา so sala (pavilion) s/t [s/t] high	ษ ฤๅษี so rue-si (hermit) s/t [s/t] high	ส เสือ so suea (tiger) s/t [s/t] high
ห หีบ ho hip (chest) h/- [h/-] high	ฬ จฬา lo chu-ia (kite) l/n [l/n] low	อ อ่าง o ang (basin) - [-/?] mid	ฮ ฮูก ho nok-huk (owl) h/- [h/-] low				

Vowel diacritics

อะ อา อิ อี อุ ู
a ā i ī u ū

ฤ ฤา ฦ ฦา เอ โอ
r ṛ l ṝ e o

Consonants

ก ข ค ฆ ง จ ฉ ช ฌ ญ
ka kha ga gha ṅa ca cha ja jha ṅa

ฎ ฐ ท ฒ ณ ต ถ ท ธ น
ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇa ta tha da dha na

ป ผ พ ภ ม ย ร ล ว
pa pha ba bha ma ya ra la va

ศ ษ ส ห
śa ṣa sa ha

Interpersonal Relationships

- Close friends may be tactile with one another and it's not unusual to see friends of the same sex often hold hands with one another.
- Thais are gentle people and are likely to be offended and upset by aggressive speech or mannerism.
- 'Face' is important to Thais and it is important that you do nothing to affect someone's 'face' – if you need to say something of critical nature then ensure that you do so in private.

Interpersonal Relationships

- This are 'indirect' communicators and, as such are unlikely to directly say anything that may hurt or offend you.
- Instead, they may use vague responses or try to change the subject.
- Although this may appear to be indecisiveness on their part, efforts should be made to try and interpret their true feelings.

Interpersonal Relationships

- **Personal Space** – This maintain a distance barrier of approximately one meter. This distance is lessened when speaking to close acquaintance.
- Although it is polite to retain **eye contact** during a conversation, it is expected that those in subordinate position will bow their head during interactions with those of a revered rank in a demonstration of respect.

Greetings, Displays of Respect and General Etiquette

➤ Greetings

- The **‘wai’** is the traditional form of greeting, given by the person of lower status to the person of higher status.
- The wai is the common form of greeting and adheres to strict rules of protocol.
- Raising both hands, palms joined with the fingers pointing upwards as if in prayer, lightly touching the body somewhere between the chest and the forehead, is the standard form.
- Wai is both a sign of respect as well as a greeting.

Greetings

➤ Greetings continued...

- The wai may be made while sitting, walking, or standing
- The person who is junior in age or status is the first one to offer the wai.
- A junior is standing and wants to wai a senior person who is seated, the junior person will stoop or bow their head while making the wai.



Greetings, Displays of Respect and General Etiquette

- **Displays of Respect** – If you are invited to Thai home,
 - Arrive close to the appointed time, although being a few minutes will not cause offence.
 - Check to see if the host is wearing shoes. If not, remove yours before entering the house.
 - Step over the threshold rather than on it.

Greetings, Displays of Respect and General Etiquette

➤ General Etiquette

- If invited to a Thai home, then allow your host and hostess to introduce you to the other guests.
- Do not use aggressive gestures or overly loud speech during conversation.
- Do not sit with your feet pointing towards people.
- If sleeping in a Thai home, then avoid sleeping with your feet towards the family altar.

Greetings, Displays of Respect and General Etiquette

➤ **General Etiquette continued...**

- Do not give black gifts or yellow flower as gifts.
- Do not criticize the royal family.
- Do not touch the top of someone's head as this is considered the most sacred part of the body.
- Do not eat with your left hand.

Status, Role Prestige

➤ **Status**

- There is a large connection of Thais living in southern California; Thais hold prestigious jobs owning banks, gas stations, beauty parlors, travel agencies, grocery stores and restaurants.

➤ **Role Prestige**

- Many Thai Americans have become educators, company executives and engineers.

Marriage and Family

➤ **Marriage**

- 56% of Thais 18 and over are married
- 17% of Thais 18 and over are divorced

➤ **Family**

- Traditional Thai families are tightly knit often including servants and employees.
- Thai family is highly structured with each family member having a specific place based on age, gender, and rank within the family.

Kinship Structure

The background of the slide is a photograph of a Thai temple complex. In the center, there is a large, seated Buddha statue on a tiered stone platform. To the right of the Buddha is a tall, multi-tiered stupa. The temple is surrounded by lush greenery, including palm trees and other tropical plants. The sky is bright and clear.

➤ Kinship Structure

- There is a hierarchy in Thai tradition.
- The culture is predominately patrilineal.

Gender Roles

The background of the slide features a faded image of a Thai temple complex. In the center, a large, seated Buddha statue is visible, flanked by several tall, tiered stupas. The scene is set in a lush, green environment with palm trees and other tropical vegetation under a clear sky.

➤ Gender Roles

- Thai men tend to aspire to military or civil service jobs.
- Most Thais in the U.S. run small businesses or work as skilled laborers.
- Women opt for healthcare careers.

Childhood and Socialization

➤ **Childhood**

- Educational accomplishments is considered a status enhancing achievement.

➤ **Socialization**

- Thai-Americans have adapted well in the American society maintaining their culture and ethnic traditions while also accepting the norms.
- They tend to be assimilated or Americanized.
- The largest demographics is in the Los Angeles with Thai Town.
- 93% of U.S. born Thai are English proficient.

Thais and Thais-American and Disabilities

- It is the responsibility of the family to care for and provide for their disabled relatives.
- The Thai government have made efforts to change the attitudes that views disabled people as unemployable. Various organizations work together with the Disability Champions Initiative to encourage people with disabilities to work with organizations.
- There are also tax benefits of employers who hire disabled workers.

Thais and Thais-American and Disabilities

- **General conception towards Person with Disabilities:** More than 90% of Thais are Buddhist. In teachings of Buddhism, disabilities is an outcome of a vice that a person had in his/her pervious life. On the other hand, Buddhism teaches to have mercy on the weak. Because of this, Thais prefer to give money to disabled beggars or to make donations to charities.

Services in California of Thais-Americans

- American Siam society
- Thai society of southern California



Thais in the U.S. Fact Sheet

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/fact-sheet/asian-american-thai-in-the-u-s/>

