

My Heritage

My name is Christopher Gray and my mother comes from Thailand and my father comes from Northern Ireland. I was born in Bedford in England and am English, although I can also have Irish and Thai citizenship.

I visit Thailand during the summer holidays and stay with my grandmother and grandfather. They live on a farm in a village in Buriram which is one of the north eastern provinces of Thailand.



Buriram province shown in red

When my grandmother tells me to get something my Mum translates from Thai to English, as my grandmother speaks Thai the language spoken in Thailand.

Religion

Like most people in Thailand my grandmother and grandfather are Buddhists and they don't believe in God. They follow the teachings of the Buddha who believe that when we die we are reborn. They worship in a Buddhist temple, such as the one below.



The main points of Buddhism are summed up below

Eightfold Path: These are the eight basic laws that all people must follow if they wish to end suffering:

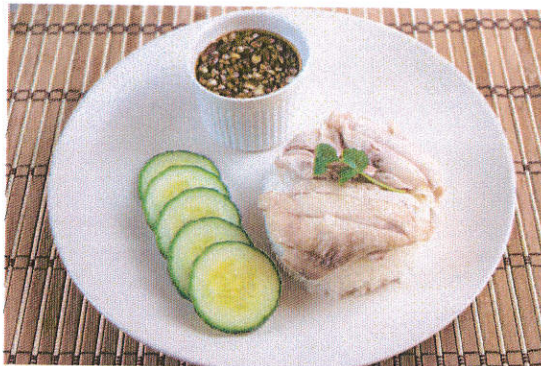
- To know the truth
- To intend to resist evil
- To not say anything to hurt others
- To respect life, property, and morality
- To work at a job that does not injure others
- To try to free one's mind from evil
- To be in control of one's feelings and thoughts
- To practice appropriate forms of concentration

Most Common Dishes of Thailand

- 1) Tom Yam Goong (chili peppers, shrimp, and mushroom).



- 2) Khao Man: (Thai chicken and rice)



- 3) Por Pia Tord: (Fried Spring Roll)



Thai festivals and celebrations

Songkran: This is the most important celebration of Thailand, taking place from April 13th to April 16th; it marks the Thai New Year. During this time Thai people throw water on each other, visit temples, and spend time with their families.

Ploughing Ceremony: This happens every year on May 9th to bless the farmers and their harvests.

Constitution Day: Held on December 10th celebrates the day Thailand's first constitution was signed in 1932.

Communication in Thailand – Thai Customs to Know

Number one on the list is the way to respectfully greet a Thailand native. Join the palms of hands and bow your head as they bow their head.

Remove shoes before going into a temple or a home. It is disrespectful to walk inside of an establishment with shoes on the feet.

Lastly, eating food in Thailand consists of tasting a little bit of everything that is laid out on the table. It is considered disrespectful to deny the host even a little bit.

Did You Know?

Chopsticks are only used in Thailand to eat noodle soups, other times they use a spoon and fork



Every Thai male is expected to be a monk at some time in his life.

As I have a Thai passport my Dad says that I will have to be a monk.

I hope he's joking!

It is customary to have five meals a day in Thailand

Buddhism is the number one religion

Thai is the language, but Chinese is one of the other languages spoken as well

Irish Culture

Storytelling and folklore is an important part of the Irish culture, along with music. Stories include the pot-of-gold held by the small Leprechaun to the great warrior Cuchulain and the creation of the Giant's Causeway.



A **leprechaun** is a type of fairy who is very mischievous.

They spend their time making and mending shoes and have a hidden pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

If captured by a human, they often grant three wishes in exchange for their freedom.

They are mostly seen on the way back from the pub!

Many important authors have come from Ireland, including James Joyce, Bram Stoker, Jonathan Swift and Oscar Wilde.

Traditional songs are used as a way to tell a story or to honour an event in history; the instruments involved in their music were bagpipes, whistles, and drums, although today many Irish folk tunes also incorporate new instruments such as the fiddle, the guitar, and others.

There are two regions in Ireland; the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland, where my Dad was born. In Ireland, there are regions called "Gaeltacht" where Gaelic or "Irish" is spoken, although every one learns English at school.

History and remembering the past is a very large part of Irish Identity, as is religion. The most-practiced religion in Ireland is Roman-Catholicism with Protestantism also being very widely-practiced, both of which are a form of Christianity.

Religion

Christians believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that he was crucified (put on a cross to die) and rose from the dead again.

Christians believe that God is a **Holy Trinity**—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Christians worship in a church and their spiritual leaders are called priests or ministers.

The Bible is the Christian holy book and is divided into the Old Testament (Jewish book) written before Jesus lived, and the New Testaments.

Christians also believe that when we die we go to Heaven if you are good and Hell if you are bad.

Heaven is where you get what you want and Hell is where the thing you hate most happens all the time.

Christians believe that being good means you have to live your life according to the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments

1. Do not worship other gods
2. Do not make statues of other gods
3. Do not swear using God's name.
4. Do not work on Sunday but keep it free to worship God
5. Respect your father and your mother.
6. Do not commit murder
7. Do not commit adultery
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not lie, but tell the truth.
10. Do not be jealous of what other people have.

Food

Ireland has a strong farming community and is strongly associated with potatoes but is home to a variety of crops.



The 'Ulster fry' is well known in Ireland, and certainly not as healthy as Thai food.

It consists of

Potato bread / Soda bread

Bacon / Sausage / Egg

Beans / Mushrooms

Soda bread or Soda farls as they are called in Ireland is a type bread found only in Ireland.

Sport

Many of the Irish take part in or watch sports, especially football and rugby.



Many people are fans of a local sport called Hurling, which is a 3,000 year old game of Gaelic origin.

Players use a Hurley, as shown to hit a ball around a field, aiming to get it into the other team's goal.

Irish festivals and celebrations



Even though Ireland is a small country St. Patrick's Day is celebrated nearly everywhere.

The day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and celebrates the Irish culture in general.

Celebrations generally involve public parades and festivals, ceilidhs, and the wearing of green attire or shamrocks

However, Saint Patrick is best remembered for driving snakes out of Ireland.



The twelve of July is a commemoration of the 1690 Battle of the Boyne, celebrated by Protestants in Northern Ireland.

Christmas Day - the birth of Christ celebrated by Christians all over the world



Easter Monday celebrates the Easter rising when republicans tried to end British rule in Ireland and establish an independent Irish Republic.