

FESTIVALS AROUND THE WORLD

LAOS



ROCKET FESTIVAL

Watch a short video on how the Rocket Festival is celebrated in Laos and take part in activities from that culture.

COUNTRY QUIZ TIME

Q1. True or false: Laos was called the land of the million tigers?

Hundreds of years ago Laos was called 'Lan Xang' meaning the land of a million elephants.

Q2. True or false: A favourite sport is volley-ball soccer?

The people of Laos love playing the Takraw which is a mix of volleyball and soccer. Players must kick a ball or feathered item over the volley net using all body parts except for the hands.

Q3. True or false: A popular food in Laos is sticky noodles?

False. Sticky rice is the main food eaten in Laos. It is soaked for 6-hrs before being steamed and served. You roll the rice into balls and dip them into the dishes served.

Q4. True or false: You can find a magical lake in Laos?

True. In the mountains of Southern Laos, Nong-Fa Lake is thought to be a magical crater lake that is feared by locals because legend has it that a man-eating monster lives at the bottom.

Q5. True or false: Laos people send well wishes by calling the soul?

True. The most popular rite in Laos is the 'Baci or calling of the soul' ceremony. Spirits are called and blessed into a string that is tied to a person's wrist whenever there is a marriage, birth or farewell.

ACTIVITY TIME:

One: Colour in a picture of Lao people during a

parade. <https://www.doverpublications.com/zb/samples/489884/sample4d.htm>

Two Cooking: Make Laarb, a delicious national dish eaten during the

festival. <https://thewoksoflife.com/pork-larb/>

Three Craft: Make a sparkling rocket. <https://www.bakerross.co.uk/craft-ideas/kids/bonfire-night-rockets/>

VIDEO EXPLAINING THE ROCKET FESTIVAL IN LAOS

Why is it celebrated?

Lao and Isaan people (Thailand) host the rocket festival to worship the gods and ask for rain. They are mainly farmers and rely on the rain to help grow their food every year.

When is it celebrated?

The Rocket Festival is a celebration that takes place between May and July each year before rainy season.

How did it come about?

Lao folklore says that when buddha was born as toad king, his sermons drew everyone's attention so the sky king became jealous and withheld rain for seven years. The king of the Mekong river (pictured) declared war but lost. He called for help from buddha, who asked the termites to build mounds up into the sky so that scorpions and centipedes can tickle the sky king's feet. The sky king then came down from heaven to battle with the Mekong river king and lost. The people have since sent rockets into the sky to remind the gods to send rain.

What happens at the festival?

Before the event, the men make the rockets out of bamboo or PVC tubes. The rockets are then paraded around the village. The women prepare food, special dances for the parade and other entertainment. On the final day, the rockets are launched-the higher they go the more rain they can expect. It is the highlight of the festival.



PRAYER TIME:

- 1.Thank you: Give thanks to God for the Lao people, whom he made and loves. Pray that we can love them too.
- 2.Children: Pray for the children of Laos, that they will get to know the love of Jesus as they grow up.
- 3.Place: Pray for Lao believers to confidently share about God our creator to their family and friends during this festival.

