



Global Water
Partnership
Southeast Asia

Splash Into Southeast Asia's Water Festivals

Photo credit: Noob Designer

Water-Splashing Festival in some Southeast Asian countries means of strengthening community ties and reinforcing their shared culture. They serve as occasions for family gatherings, communal feasts, and the performance of traditional cultural activities.

Water splashing during festivals, though a playful act, is a deeply symbolic one, representing soul cleansing and the welcoming of prosperity and good luck.

Source: The ASEAN Magazine: (2024, May 28). Water Festivals of Southeast Asia and Northeast India. <https://www.idrica.com/blog/the-ten-challenges-of-water-management-in-southeast-asia/>

Photo credit: Getty Images



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Photo credit: kempatour

CHOL CHNAM THMAY CAMBODIA

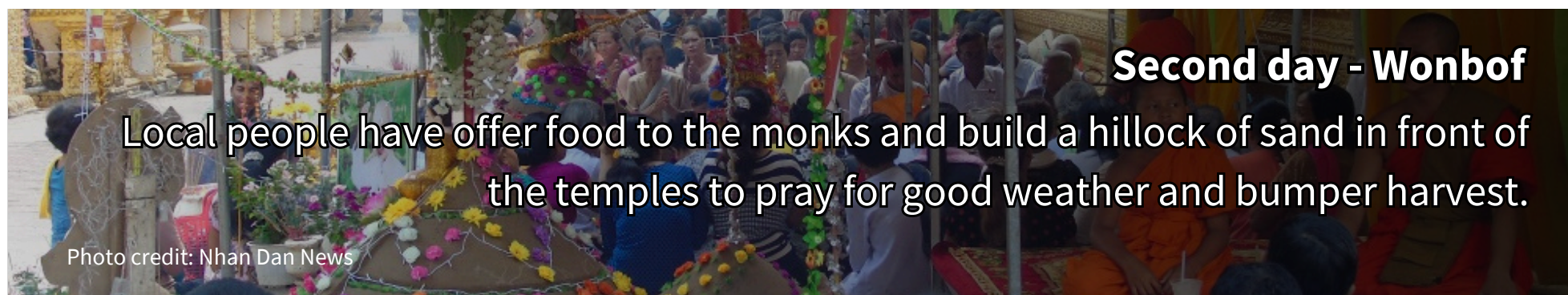
Known as the **Khmer New Year**, aims to usher with **spiritual cleansing, renewal**, and **gratitude**, while also **celebrating** the **changing agricultural seasons** and **honoring ancestors**.



First day - Chol Sangkran Thmay

Making offerings to the Buddhist monks and paying respects to their ancestors. Everyone will take a bath, wear a brilliant outfit, and go to the temple.

Photo credit: Handspan Travel Indochina



Second day - Wonbof

Local people have offer food to the monks and build a hillock of sand in front of the temples to pray for good weather and bumper harvest.

Photo credit: Nhan Dan News



Third day - Vereak Laeung Sak

Villagers prepare water and flowers for the Buddha bathing ceremony, also young people participate in folk games like blindfolding, pot smashing, and bag jumping.

Photo credit: Xinhua/Sovannara/IANS

Source: Nhan Dan News: (2019, April). Chol Chnam Thmay A short guide to the Khmer people's New Year festival. <https://en.nhandan.vn/megastory/cholchnamthmay/>

BOUN PI MAY

LAO PDR



To **brings prosperity, happiness, and purity** to human life. This is an opportunity to **nurture** and **mold national art**, also time of **spiritual renewal**.

First day (Sangkhan Luang). Laotians clean their homes, gather offerings, and visit temples to cleanse Buddha statues and listen to monks in preparation for the festival.

Day two - Sangkhan Nao, which translates to “the day of no day”. This is a day of rest, enjoy time with family and friends without rituals or obligations.

Third day - Sangkhan Kheun Pi Mai. Dedicated to visiting senior family members, where they perform **the Baci ceremony** to strengthen bonds and invite good luck and prosperity.

Throughout the three days, there are many exciting activities:
Water splashing, Soo Kwan, sand stupa building, beauty pageants, etc.

Source: Phuong Mai NGUYEN: (2025, February 07). Learn about the Boun Pi Mai-Laos New Year. <https://authentiktravel.com/boun-pi-mai-laos-new-year>



THINGYAN MYANMAR



A **vibrant, joyous, social**, and culturally symbolic occasion, the Myanmar New Year represents **new beginnings, hope, community spirit** and **prosperity**.

Day 1 (Thingyan Eve - A Kyo Nei): Religious activities begin with alms, offerings, and the Buddha statue bathing ceremony, followed by music, song, and dance.

Day 2 (A Kya Nei): The water festival starts, accompanied by water throwing, festive performances, and dancing in the streets.

Day 3 (A-tet Nei): Water throwing continues in a more courteous manner, with prayers for fortune, good rainfall, and a successful harvest.

Day 4 (New Year's Day - Hnit Hsan Ta Yet Nei): Traditional customs are observed with the release of animals, washing the hair of the elderly, and applying sandalwood paste and thanaka.

Source: 365 Travel (2023, July 02). Thingyan – Myanmar's traditional water festival. <https://365travel.asia/thingyan-myanmars-traditional-water-festival/>

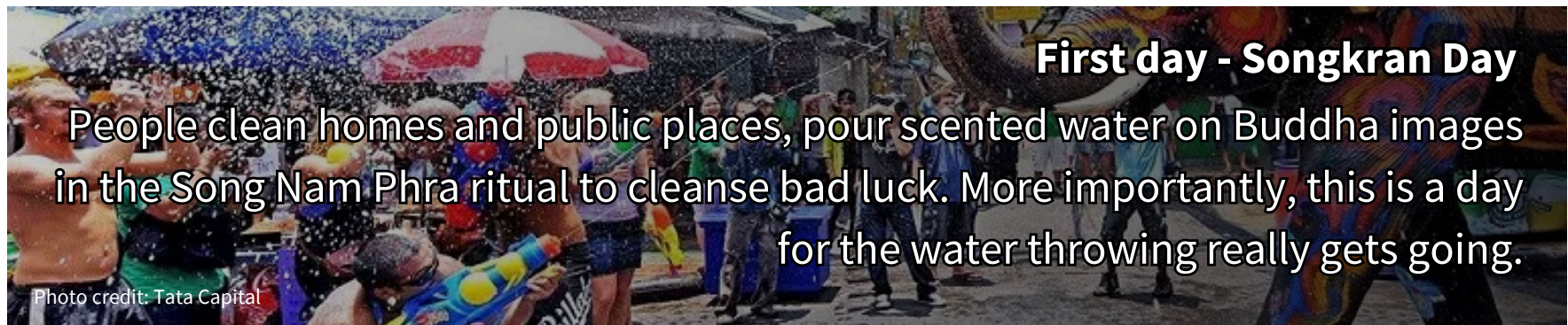


SONGKRAN

THAILAND



The traditional **start of the new year**, time for **family reunions**, **honoring elders** and **ancestors**, and **pouring water** to **symbolize cleansing, reverence**, and **good fortune**.



CHOL CHNAM THMAY

VIETNAM



The Chol Chnam Thmay Festival of the **Khmer ethnic minority people**, expressing their **wish for a new year** with **favourable weather** and **bumper crops**.

Chol sangkran Chmay day is the first day of calendar procession ceremony: People bathe, dress nicely, and bring sacrificial gifts to the temple, followed by a procession and chanting.

On **Wonbof day**, rice offerings are made to the temple, and a sand mountain is covered in a ceremony for love.

On **Lom Sak day**, breakfast is offered to monks, Buddha statues are bathed, and prayers are said for the deceased, followed by a home Buddha bathing ceremony for forgiveness.

Source: Inside Travel Experts. Chol Chnam Thmay Festival. <https://www.customizevietnamtours.com/vietnam-travel-guide/chol-chnam-thmay-festival.html#:~:text=Held%20in%20mid%2DApril%2C%20the,excited%20to%20care%20for%20holiday.>



Photo credit: TNK TRAVEL