

THAILAND LEGALIZES MARIJUANA

July 10th, 2022

WARM-UP QUESTIONS: *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s).*

1. Do you have any plants in your home? How big are they?
2. Read the headline above. Have you heard this news story? If so, say what you know. If not, can you guess what it is about?

VOCABULARY: *Match the following vocabulary words with a description. Use a dictionary if you need to.*

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|---------------|---|
| 1. Legalize | a) to go through, to experience |
| 2. Severely | b) surprising |
| 3. Undergo | c) to decide in court that someone is guilty of a crime |
| 4. Consume | d) joined with the flavor or effect of something |
| 5. Recreation | e) a plant that is grown in large amounts |
| 6. Fine | f) to make something legal |
| 7. Startling | g) to eat, drink, use |
| 8. Crop | h) enjoyment |
| 9. Convict | i) money that must be paid as a punishment |
| 10. Infused | j) very seriously, harshly |

LISTEN: *Listen to the audio track on eslnewsstories.com or to a reader of the text. Try to fill in the missing words. Then check your answers with the full text.*

In a surprising move, the Thai government legalized marijuana. The plant, also known locally as ganja, has a _____ of use in Thailand, but in recent years, Thailand and neighboring countries have severely punished users and sellers of all illegal drugs. Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam, all have the _____ penalty for certain drug crimes, and Thailand itself underwent a 'war on drugs' during the early 2000s.

However, since 2018, medical marijuana has been legal in Thailand, and from early June, Thais and visitors to Thailand have been able to _____, trade, and consume marijuana for recreation.

Thai officials warn that smoking ganja in public is still a crime that is punishable by a fine and jail time.

There are several reasons for this startling _____ in Southeast Asia. For one, Thailand suffered economically during the pandemic, and the government wants to boost their medical tourism industry, as well as profit from the global medical marijuana _____. Also, farmers in the countryside can benefit by planting a crop that grows very well in Thailand’s climate. Finally, prisons in Thailand are overcrowded with prisoners that were convicted of drug-related crimes. Changing the law has made it possible to release _____ than three thousand prisoners.

How the industry will develop is uncertain, but for now, marijuana users are enjoying their new freedom. They have been able to buy various types of marijuana, and some _____ have begun selling marijuana-infused food and beverages.

WORD FORMS: *Fill in different forms for the vocabulary from the article. Use a dictionary if you need to. Where there is an x, the word is unimportant for ESL students, has a different meaning, or does not exist. Sometimes there are multiple possible answers, and sometimes the adjective form is a past or present participle.*

VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB	NOUN
legalize			
x		severely	
consume		x	
			recreation
	startling		
	infused	x	

In a surprising move, the Thai government legalized marijuana. The plant, also known locally as ganja, has a history of use in Thailand, but in recent years, Thailand and neighboring countries have severely punished users and sellers of all illegal drugs. Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam, all have the death penalty for certain drug crimes, and Thailand itself underwent a ‘war on drugs’ during the early 2000s.

However, since 2018, medical marijuana has been legal in Thailand, and from early June, Thais and visitors to Thailand have been able to grow, trade, and consume marijuana for recreation. Thai officials warn that smoking ganja in public is still a crime that is punishable by a fine and jail time.

There are several reasons for this startling development in Southeast Asia. For one, Thailand suffered economically during the pandemic, and the government wants to boost their medical tourism industry, as well as profit from the global medical marijuana market. Also, farmers in the countryside can benefit by planting a crop that grows very well in Thailand's climate. Finally, prisons in Thailand are overcrowded with prisoners that were convicted of drug-related crimes. Changing the law has made it possible to release more than three thousand prisoners.

How the industry will develop is uncertain, but for now, marijuana users are enjoying their new freedom. They have been able to buy various types of marijuana, and some restaurants have begun selling marijuana-infused food and beverages.

Sources: npr.org, reuters.com, time.com, washingtonpost.com
For source links, see the article on ESLNewsStories.com

COMPREHENSION: *Decide if the following are true (T) or false (F), and then discuss your answers with your partner(s).*

1. Some countries in Southeast Asia kill people for drug-related crimes. (T / F)
2. It is now okay to smoke marijuana in public in Thailand. (T / F)
3. Thailand expects economic benefits from legalizing marijuana. (T / F)
4. Some prisoners were released from Thai prisons. (T / F)

COMPLETE: *Re-order the following sentences. Capitalize certain words and add punctuation.*

1. marijuana / can / eat / in / you / that / it / food / has
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2. policy / surprising / is / change / thailand's / drug
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DISCUSSION: *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s). Try to speak in sentences and ask follow-up questions.*

1. Were you surprised to learn that Thailand has legalized marijuana? Why or why not?
2. Have you been to Thailand? If not, are you interested in visiting Thailand? Why is Thailand a popular tourist destination?
3. Do you like to use traditional or alternative medicine? Do you also see a modern doctor when necessary?
4. Would you try medical marijuana if a doctor recommended it? Why or why not?
5. What is the legal status of marijuana in your country or region?
6. Does your country have the death penalty? Which crimes can be punished with death?

7. Have you eaten Thai food? What was it like? If not, would you like to try it?
8. Did your country suffer economically because of the pandemic? How is it doing now?
9. Are prisons overcrowded in your country? Should we care about the conditions that prisoners are being kept in?
10. What crops are (legally) grown in your country?
11. What do you do for recreation?

WRITING: Write a paragraph that clearly states your opinion on the above news article. Give reasons for your opinion.

ANSWERS

VOCABULARY: 1-f, 2-j, 3-a, 4-g, 5-h, 6-i, 7-b, 8-e, 9-c, 10-d

WORD FORMS: legal, legally, legalization, severe, severity, consumed/consumable, consumption, recreate, recreational, recreationally, startle, startlingly, startlingly/startlement, infuse, infusion

COMPREHENSION: 1-T, 2-F, 3-T, 4-T

COMPLETE: 1. You can eat food that has marijuana in it. 2. Thailand's drug policy change is surprising.