Peun Karnkhuy / Banana-stalk Gun

Site of Documentation
Bangkok, Thailand

Description

Peun Karnkhuy is (as its name suggests) a simple toy, shaped like a gun that is made from a banana stalk! The toy is popular with young children all over Thailand and once made, it can be played with alone or better still with a group of friends.

Who Plays?

This game can be played alone or with a group of friends. It can be played with by unlimited numbers of boys and girls, aged 5 years or older.

Accessories/Equipments

The game requires each player to have a Peun Karnkhuy, a toy that is handmade from a piece of banana stalk. As the banana stalk usually wilts within a few days, they are not sold by shops and a new toy has to be created for each game. Usually older family members make the toy for the children as it requires strength and skilled fingers to cut the banana stalk.
Time and Place

Peun Karnkhuy can be played indoors or outdoors at any time of year, as long as the weather is cool and dry. As it can take some time to make the toy, it is most often played out of school on the weekends.

Skill, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

Players have to use their fingers or the palms of their hands to swipe the raised strips of stalk to create the sound of a gun. The harder and faster they can do this, the more noise is created.

Popularity

This toy is played with by children all over Thailand throughout the year. Boys particularly like to play the game.

History of the Game

Peun Karnkhuy is one of the oldest and most well known toys in Thailand. Although no one knows the exact origins of the game, it has been played by generations of children across the country.

How to Make the Toy?

1. First, players need to find a large banana stalk (approximately 25-30 inches in length).
2. Next, carefully slice the stalk four to five times to create a series of thin flaps on one side of the branch. Each flap should be around four inches from the next.

How is the Game Played?

**Step 1.** Players need to hold the *Peun Karnkhuy* with one hand, making sure that all the flaps on the toy are bent back and raised at a 90 degree angle.
Step 2. Using the other hand, the players need to swipe their hand quickly across the flaps in one long swift motion, pushing each of the flaps down. If they do this quickly enough, the flaps should snap shut making a cracking noise, similar to that of a gun.