

# Travel



Phonesavanh Vongsay

**X**ae Ponglay, the biggest waterfall in Attapeu province, draws large numbers of visitors on public holidays and is also a popular location for shooting films or music videos featuring stars from neighbouring countries.

The waterfall, which is part of the Xe Pian River, has become a key tourist draw in the southeastern corner of Laos, an area with a lot of untapped tourism potential. It lies within the Xe Pian National Protected Area which spans about 240,000 hectares in the provinces of Champassak and Attapeu.

The area is one of the most important natural reserves in Laos and its forests are home to many tree and animal species.

“Xae Ponglay is the most visited waterfall in the province, followed by Xae Pha waterfall which used to be the most popular at one time,” said the Head of the Tourism Marketing Unit of the provincial Information, Culture and Tourism Department, Mr Khamlek Sengsoulichanh.

Mr Khamlek said fewer people visited Xae Ponglay in the past because there was no road access, but that has now changed.

Xae Ponglay waterfall is about 130 metres wide. The left side is about 20 metres high while the right side ranges from 35 to 40 metres in height. It is a stunning sight in the rainy season when large volumes of water cascade over it but the amount drops in the dry season.

“Many years ago, only a few local people knew about this waterfall. But now both local and foreign visitors come here and stars from Thailand also come here to shoot music videos,” said Mr Khamlek.

Xae Ponglay, which was given its name by local people, was discovered by the outside world in 1998 when an independent tour group came across it.

“We don’t know anything about its origins because it is far away from any significant area of human habitation,”

# Attapeu waterfall a magnet for tourists, film stars

*Welcoming Visit Laos Year 2018, Vientiane Times is publishing a series of feature articles and images inviting you to experience the authentic nature, culture, history and hospitality of Laos, Jewel of the Mekong.*



Mr Khamlek said. The waterfall is part of Hinlad village in Sanamxay district, about 68km from the provincial capital. It lies along unpaved Road 18A and can be accessed in the wet and dry seasons after a two-hour car journey.

On the way, visitors pass through ethnic villages and cross the Xe Pian Bridge. There are rice fields on both sides of the road, a large lake called Nong Lom, various historic sites, and people boating on the Xe Pian River. “But there are no shops anywhere along the road,” Mr Khamlek warned.

Visitors can stop at Nonglom Lake at the foot of the Bolaven Plateau, where lucky birdwatchers might catch a glimpse of the giant ibis, black ibis, sarus crane, and white-winged duck as well as white-rumped, long-billed and red-headed vultures.

“In the wet season, you can’t cross the small Houay Xoy River as it could be dangerous. You need to take a ferry and then hire a vehicle that is provided on the other side, which is about 7km from Xae Ponglay,” Mr Khamlek said.

On the way, visitors can stop off at the province’s second biggest waterfall – Xae Pha - which is 61km from Sanamxay district and about 7km before reaching Xae Ponglay. The Xae Pha waterfall is about 23 metres high and 120 metres wide.

Mr Khamlek said there are two more routes leading to Xae Ponglay - one is via Pathoumphon district in Champassak province and is about 65km long, and another goes via Pakxong district in Champassak over a distance of about 40km. “But you can only use these two routes in the dry season,” he added.

Attapeu is located in the southeastern tip of Laos and is inhabited by various ethnic groups. The morning market in the provincial capital is a great place to see these colourful people, who gather there to sell their produce.

To the north, Attapeu is bounded by Xekong, and to the west by Champassak. It shares borders with Vietnam and Cambodia.

The province’s terrain is rugged and wild, interspersed with scenic valleys. The landscape consists of thick forests, rivers, streams,



The Xae Ponglay waterfall.

--Photo Khamlek Sengsoulichanh

waterfalls and plains against a backdrop of mountains.

“Attapeu has 16 waterfalls that are officially on the map, and I think there are others

that we don’t know about,” Mr Khamlek said.

Visitors to the Xe Pian National Protected Area can spend the night at a home-stay

to experience the local way of life and eat a traditional meal.

They can also enjoy a relaxing evening on the banks of the Xe Pian River.

During the day, treks or a cruise in a boat along the Xe Pian River to the waterfalls, including Xae Ponglay, are other popular activities.

## The companies advertised on this page are sponsoring the Travel column



**ບໍລິສັດສຸດໃຈທ່ອງທ່ຽວຈຳກັດສູຕ໌ຈາຍ**  
Soutchai travel Sole co.,ltd

Tour organize/Private Mini bus/Train-Bus Ticket/Visa/Hotel reservation and world-wide Air ticketing

**Location**  
Nokeokoummane Rd, Ban Mixay, Chanthabouly District, Vientiane, Laos  
Tel:+856 21 254512-5, Mobile:+856 20 5483 0000, 20 5534 0000  
Email: [kenlotchana.travel@gmail.com](mailto:kenlotchana.travel@gmail.com)  
[www.soutchaitravel.com](http://www.soutchaitravel.com)

**ກຸ່ມບໍລິສັດພິງສະຫວັນ**  
ທ່ຽວ ຖະໜົນສີບຸນເຮືອງ, ນະຄອນຫຼວງວຽງຈັນ  
ໂທ: 030 521 0675  
ເວັບໄຊ: [www.Phongsavanhgroup.com](http://www.Phongsavanhgroup.com)

**Phongsavanh Group Company**  
Address : Sebounheuang Street, Vientiane.  
Tel: 030 521 0675  
Web: [www.Phongsavanhgroup.com](http://www.Phongsavanhgroup.com)

**ຮັບພິມເຊັກ ເອກະສານ ທີ່ມີລະອຽດຄວາມປະດິດໄພ**

ຮັບພິມເຊັກ ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ ເຊັ່ນ :

ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ

ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ

ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ ຮັບພິມເອກະສານທຸກຊະນິດ

Welcome to the Luang Prabang View Hotel

**LUANG PRABANG VIEW HOTEL, Phou Meo, Lao-Thai Friendship Road, P.O.Box 675, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR.**  
Tel: +856 71 260 560; Fax: +856 71 260 290;  
Email: [booking@lpview.com](mailto:booking@lpview.com) [www.luangprabangview.com](http://www.luangprabangview.com)