

SOUTHERN LAOS

Charming by nature

A person is seen from behind, paddling a small wooden boat on a wide river. The scene is set during a golden sunset, with the sky filled with soft, orange and blue clouds. The water reflects the warm light of the sun. In the background, a dark silhouette of a forested shoreline is visible. The overall mood is peaceful and scenic.

BEYOND THE ORDINARY



Sunset cruise on the
Mekong River



WHAT CAN YOU FIND IN THIS TRAVEL GUIDE

This booklet is your guide to a fantastic travel experience beyond the ordinary. Your participation in any of the remarkable initiatives, attractions and activities will not only provide you with a unique experience, but also directly help to improve the livelihoods of the local communities.

Photographs, maps, general travel information and hints to cultural Do's and Don'ts complement the initiatives, attractions and activities. This first edition of the Southern Laos booklet covers a wide selection of things to do and places to visit, and puts a specific emphasis on Champasak Province. The South of Laos, however, is much more than Champasak Province and Attapeu, Salavan and Sekong Provinces offer a wide range of adventures, which will form part of future editions of this booklet.

For updates and more information on Southern Laos, please visit the destination website www.southern-laos.com.

WELCOME TO SOUTHERN LAOS!

Less travelled routes invite you to explore the culture, nature, and a refreshingly slower pace of life in Southern Laos.

The mighty Mekong River – a true lifeline for many people living on the plains – not only offers the exotic Four Thousand Islands and Southeast Asia’s biggest waterfall, but also opportunities to discover traditional riverside village ways of life. You can kayak or cycle along its banks, hop on boats from one island to the other or simply relax and enjoy the river and time going by.

Explore the stunning waterfalls of the Bolaven Plateau, and learn how coffee is grown and processed on the rich volcanic soils before tasting a freshly brewed cup of Lao coffee. Enjoy an easy trek to an ethnic village or go for an adrenaline-fuelled adventure, zip-lining across waterfalls and walking high up above the jungle floor, through the forest canopy.

Vat Phou, an ancient Khmer temple complex and UNESCO World Heritage Site, is located in beautiful surroundings, where you can immerse yourself in nature and go back in time. Take a break and stop in charming Champasak for some more history, French colonial buildings, the intriguing Shadow Puppet Theatre or go for a relaxing massage.

Explore some options for ecotourism activities in the Xe Pian National Protected Area. Ride on the back of an elephant, go on a forest trek, or simply observe life in the wetlands.

Last but not least, discover the cultural and historic treasures of Pakse, Southern Laos’ main city, where the Sedone River flows into the mighty Mekong River and where modernity meets with local tradition.

The natural charms of Southern Laos offer you a truly diverse experience beyond the ordinary.



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ESSENTIALS FOR SOUTHERN LAOS

- Getting there and around
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- Cultural tips. Do's and Don'ts.
- Lao language kit
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Traditional fisherman on the Mekong

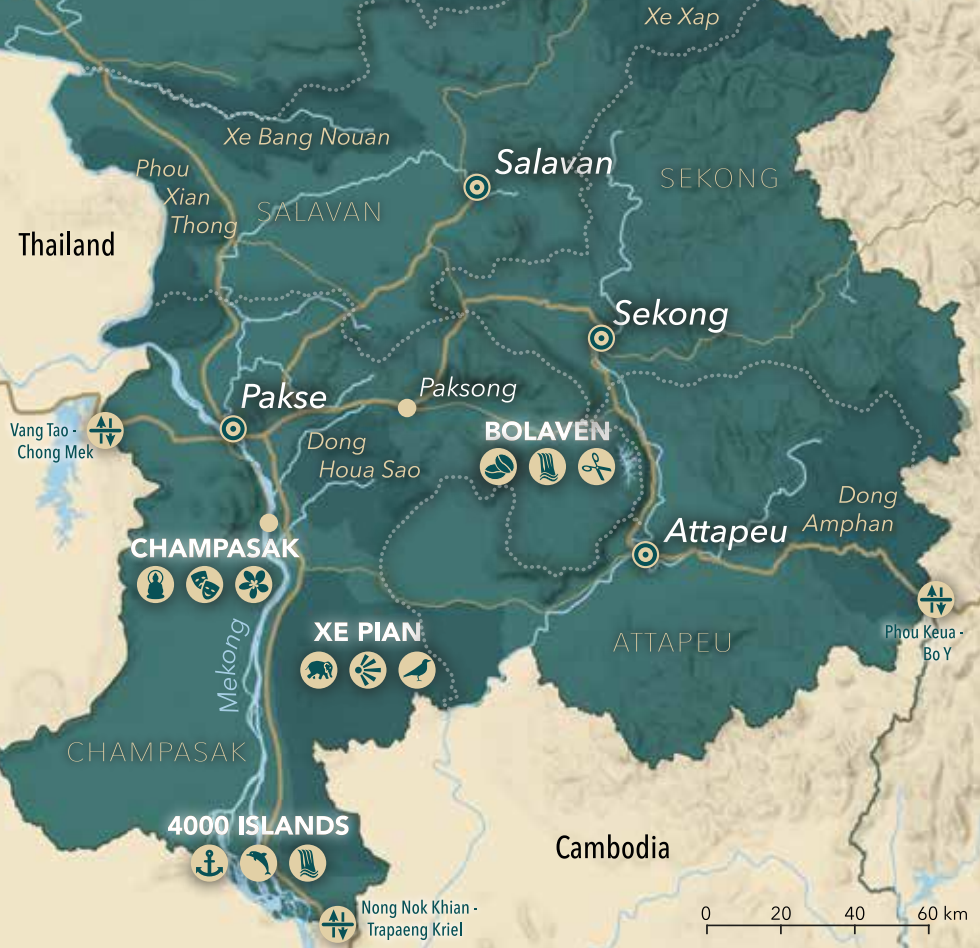
EXPLORE SOUTHERN LAOS

Laos is a country rich in culture and nature. The South is particularly known for its geographic and ethnic diversity, historical heritage and for a traditional and laid-back atmosphere.

LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Laos) is a landlocked Southeast Asian country bordered by Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, China and Myanmar. The country covers some 236,800 square kilometres, while the four southern provinces Champasak, Salavan, Sekong and Attapeu cover an area of 44,091 square kilometres. Southern Laos has border crossings with Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam and an international airport in Pakse. Infrastructure plans aim to further improve the South's connectivity to the Greater Mekong Region in the future.

The natural environment of Southern Laos is characterised by the Mekong River, the Bolaven Plateau, and the Wetlands.



MAP LEGEND

Tourist Amenities

-  Spa
-  Coffee Plantations

Culture

-  Temple
-  Theatre
-  Handicraft

Nature

-  Waterfall
-  Viewpoint
-  Elephant riding
-  Dolphin watching
-  Wetlands

Transportation

-  Border crossing
-  Boat landing



Buddhism is the primary religion of Laos

CLIMATE

Travel to Southern Laos is possible at any time of the year. The climate can be divided into three seasons: June to October is the rainy season, which can also be called the green season. The Monsoon rains refresh the lush vegetation of the forests creating numerous waterfalls, and the planting season brings an emerald green colour to the rice paddies. November to February is mostly dry, the vegetation is lush and green, and temperatures are cooler but slowly increase towards the end of this period. These months mark harvest season in the coffee plantations and on the rice fields. March to May are hot and dry with the Lao New Year celebrations, known locally as Pii Mai, bringing the only refreshing water in the form of water fights between local villagers. The Bolaven Plateau has a relatively mild climate due to its elevation and remains green due to regular rainfall throughout the year.



Exploring waterfalls on the Bolaven



The Katu, one of the ethnic groups in Southern Laos

HISTORY

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The history of Southern Laos goes back to pre-Angkorian times with Vat Phou being its most prominent legacy. In the 14th century, the first Lao kingdom, Lane Xang, or The Land of a Million Elephants was established under King Saysettirathat. In the 17th century, Lane Xang broke up into three kingdoms: Vientiane, Luang Prabang and Champasak. The latter was ruled from Champasak by the royal family during the 18th and 19th century. During the 19th and early 20th century, Laos became part of French Indochina. Champasak continued to be ruled by the royal family but under a colonial administrative system set up in Pakse. The 20th century was characterised by the Indochina wars impacting not only Laos but also other Southeast Asian countries. The Ho Chi Minh Trail, that led through Laos' provinces of Attapeu, Sekong and Salavan bear testimony to the these times and large numbers of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) left over from those wars still pose a threat to people's lives. In 1975, the last Prince of Laos, Boun Oum, took refuge in France and left behind a palace that was still under construction which is today the Champasak Palace Hotel in Pakse. In the same year, Laos achieved independence and the Lao People's Democratic Republic was established with the capital in Vientiane.



Daily alms giving



Emerald green rice paddies during the rainy season

PEOPLE

Laos is a multi-ethnic country with a total population estimated at 6.8 million in 2014. Of these approximately one fifth live in Southern Laos. The dominant ethnic group in the South is the Lao Loum, the so-called lowland Lao. Living mainly on the Plains of the Mekong River, their rhythm of life is still strongly connected to the rice farming cycles, fishing and weaving activities and the Buddhist calendar. Other ethnic groups in the South with much smaller populations include the Alak, Kaleum, Katang, Katou, Lavae, Lavene, Ngae, Nyajeung, Pako, Phuthai, Souay, Ta-Oy, Talieng and Tong. Each group has its own traditions, language and dialects, housing style, handicrafts, ways of living, beliefs and rituals, including diverse practices of animism and ancestor worship.



Rice planting

ECONOMY

Tourism is a major source of income for Laos. In 2014, the tourism sector generated about US\$ 641 million and it is estimated that every seventh person is linked directly or indirectly to the tourism sector. Tourism contributes to the economy in the South where industrialization is still limited. Besides mining activities and hydroelectric power, major industries include the Beer Lao brewery, Dao-Heuang Group's coffee processing plant on the road to the Bolaven, a pharmaceutical factory and a few assembly plants. The main agricultural items produced in the area include timber, coffee, tea, cardamom, and rattan.



PAKSE. MORE THAN A GATEWAY.

Pakse, the capital city of the province of Champasak, is located at the confluence of the mighty Mekong River and the Sedone. It is Southern Laos' trade and transportation hub, connecting with Bangkok to the west, Da Nang to the east and Phnom Penh to the south. At first sight, Pakse seems to be simply a gateway to other places, but there is more to it than meets the eye.







Once you are here, take some time and explore the hidden treasures of Pakse. If you wander around a little, you'll soon discover old French Colonial Buildings, a Vietnamese quarter, Buddhist and Chinese temples and an old Catholic church, or you can sit and have a freshly brewed Bolaven Coffee or Lao tea while watching people and life go by.





MAP LEGEND


Tourist Amenities

-  Tourist information
-  Hotel
-  Restaurant
-  Coffee
-  Shopping
-  Hospital

Culture

-  Temple
-  Church
-  Historical monument

Transportation

-  Bus station
-  Cycling

Why not rent a bicycle and follow some of the proposed routes in and around Pakse? Or simply take a tuk tuk up the hill to the big golden Buddha at “Wat Phou Salao” for a stunning view over the Mekong and the town. The light is particularly beautiful in the late afternoon hours, not only from the mountain, but also from one of the boat restaurants on the Mekong River or from a rooftop, where you are able to have dinner or just a drink as you watch the sun go down.

For those who like the early morning hours, a visit to the bustling morning market (Daoheuang market), is recommended, and if you haven’t tried out the “Samlor”, a motorcycle with a side-car, then this could be the moment to go for a ride. For a quiet shopping experience, visit one of the handicraft shops in the centre of town. In the woods, about 7km out of town, is an Art Museum with a small café offering relaxing views of the forest.



The Chinese Society building in Pakse

How to get there and around

There are several ways to get around. See → Getting there and around

Where to stay

There is a variety of accommodation in all price ranges. See → About food and accommodation

Where to eat

You can find Lao, Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese, Indian, Korean and European food. There are also small street noodle shops, floating boat restaurants, a rooftop terrace restaurant, hotel restaurants with family kitchens or buffet lunches, and cafes with bakeries.

See → About food and accommodation

PAKSE HISTORY

During the French colonial period at the beginning of the 20th century, Pakse became the capital of Champasak Province. The old quarter is located in the bend of the Sedone River where you can still see a few remaining buildings from that period.

Visit the Champasak Provincial Historical Museum

Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. / 1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.



FROM THE CITY TO THE RICE PADDY FIELDS. PAKSE ON BICYCLE.

One of the best ways to explore and discover Pakse and its surroundings is on a bicycle. Slow enough to get a taste of different areas and to stop at historical buildings, Buddhist temples or for a coffee break, but at the same time fast enough to travel some distance for stunning viewpoints or to enjoy the rural landscape outside the town centre.

Wat Phou Salao Tour – Cycling to one of the most scenic outposts

Start at Résidence Sisouk and ride to the Daoheuang market. Cross the Japanese bridge that spans the Mekong for 1,380 metres and turn left after about 400 metres. After a small incline you will arrive at the parking and food stall area. Here you can either park your bicycle and take the stairs all the way up to the big golden Buddha and Wat Phou Salao (first half on concrete stairs, second half on wooden stairs that are in bad condition) or continue to the right on a concrete road. If you decide to take the road, the ride is relatively long as you go around the back of the mountain. After some steep uphill biking (gradient of 12-15%) the road takes you another 1.5km on the flat, back towards the front of the mountain. After a big right bend, your reward is a stunning panoramic view from the big

Cyclists meet the monks at Wat Luang



golden Buddha looking over Pakse, the Mekong River, and the Bolaven Plateau in the distance. Continue to Wat Phou Salao where you can take a rest and get a drink from the small shop before you return back the same way. You can later stop to explore the Daoheuang market or go for a buffet-lunch at the Champasak Grand Hotel, which is located on your right after the bridge.

Best time *After sunrise or late afternoon before sunset*

Distance *22km (or 12km by bicycle if combined with walking), 125m elevation gain (up to 12-15% gradient)*

/ 2 to 3 hours

Type of bicycle *City bike, mountain bike if you ride uphill*



In the rice paddy fields

Pakse City Tour – Cycling to Pakse’s main points of interest

This city trip starts at Wat Luang, continues along the Sedone River, past the confluence with the Mekong until you see floating boat restaurants. Continue downstream until a left curve takes you to the busy and colourful Daoheuang market. From there, head towards the stadium and turn left onto Road 13. Continue along Road 13 until you see the Historical Museum on your right, and the Hero Monument on your left-hand side. As you continue you will see a Chinese Temple and Wat Phabat, both on your right-hand side. A little further along, near the Russian bridge, you can appreciate the view of the historic Champasak Palace Hotel. Continue on Road 13 to enter the Vietnamese quarter at the next junction on your left. Continue to pass the old Catholic Church and the hospital and turn into the market area, where you will find the Champasak Plaza, a shopping centre. Continue to ride past the Pakse Hotel and go straight on at the junction. Turn left back into Road 13 and go on towards the Vietnamese Consulate where you turn left again. You can take the second small road on the right to the Vida bakery or turn left at the same intersection to go back to Wat Luang and continue to the Pakse Hotel where you can have a Beer Lao at the rooftop restaurant Le Panorama and enjoy the beautiful 360° view over the city.

Best time *Morning and later afternoon hours*

Distance / Time *9km, flat / 30-40 minutes*

Type of bicycle *City bike*



Discover the Vietnamese quarter



and French colonial buildings in Pakse

Sedone River Tour – Cycling from the city into the rural landscape

Pack a picnic of local food (freshly baked baguettes, barbecued fish, spicy salad, fruit and sticky rice) and get some water before you start your journey from the tourist heart of town at the French Bridge (currently under construction). Head south on Road 13 and turn left at the beautiful Wat Phabat. Follow this road for about 3 km until it turns into a red dirt track. You will see the Sedone River on your left-hand side as you cross some bridges over small streams. As you leave the town behind, your surroundings turn into a rural landscape passing small villages and ending up in a completely agricultural world in the middle of rice paddy fields. In the distance to your right you can see a hill. Take a break and enjoy your picnic or use your Lao phrasebook to have a chat with the farmers working in the fields, before retracing your steps back to town.

Best time *Morning or evening. Note that the red dirt road can be hard, bumpy and dusty in the dry season and muddy and slippery in the rainy season.*

Distance *20km (or longer if you want), flat, dirt road after 3km / 1.5 to 2 hours*

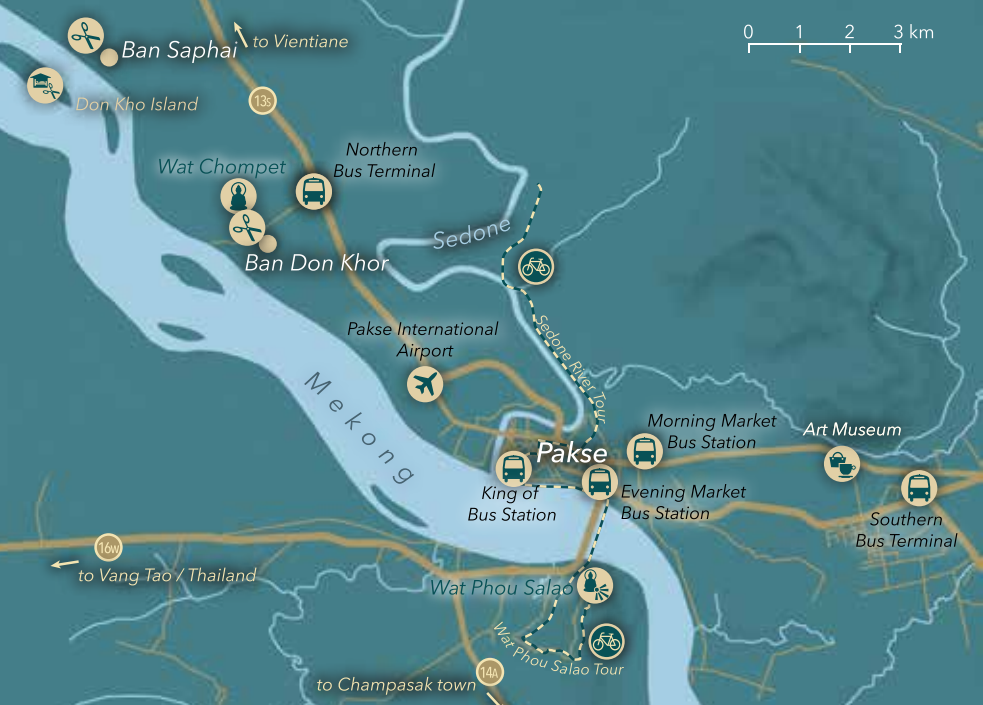
Type of bicycle *Mountain bike*

Where to rent a bicycle

Currently, only few bicycles are available in Pakse. SL Travels along Road 13 (travel agents and restaurants) has probably the biggest selection of bicycles, Miss Noy in the same road has a few bicycles as well. You can also ask at your guesthouse or other travel agents in town.



The Japanese bridge



MAP LEGEND

Tourist Amenities

-  Homestay
-  Coffee
-  Shopping



Culture

-  Temple
-  Handicraft

Nature

-  Viewpoint

Transportation

-  Airport
-  Bus station
-  Cycling



PAKSE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS. STRIKE OUT ON THE HANDICRAFT ROUTE.

Visit local artisans. In the village of Don Khor, located at the entrance to Wat Chompet, with its impressive 30-metre high Buddha, you can observe stone carvers making traditional Buddha images. Ban Saphai, on the other hand, is known for its traditional Lao weavings with unique patterns. The local craft centre was reopened in 2014 and you can see textiles being made here.

Weaving – Ban Saphai and Don Kho Island

The villages on the banks of the Mekong and the island just a short boat ride from the mainland, are known for their silk weaving and textiles. You can see women weaving in the craft centre or, on Don Kho, in the shade of their wooden houses. Traditionally, they use silk which nowadays is sometimes replaced by polyester thread. If you ask, you might even have a chance to get a weaving lesson yourself. It is also a good opportunity to directly purchase a souvenir from the weavers, knowing you have supported them and their families directly with your purchase. While you visit the island, you can walk through rice fields, see vegetable gardens and stand on beautiful sandy river beaches.



Women weaving textiles in Ban Saphai



Wat Chompet

Buddha stone carvings – Ban Don Khor and Wat Chompet

Just outside Wat Chompet, you can meet the Buddha stone carvers. Take some time to appreciate the beautiful carvings they are making. Then you might want to get a closer look at the big golden Buddha of Wat Chompet. You can even go inside, but please make sure to respect the local culture and dress modestly, covering your shoulders and knees.

How to get there

Ban Saphai is about 18km north of Pakse, while Ban Don Khor is about 10km north of Pakse on Road 13. From Pakse you can rent a car, a van, or a motorbike. You can also book an excursion with one of the travel agents in Pakse. If you prefer to be more active, you can hire a bicycle or book a tour and make it a one-day trip or even stay at the basic homestay on Don Kho Island.



Buddha stone carvings



Dream Weavers' handicraft shop

SHOPPING. FROM LAOS TO THE WORLD.

Handicrafts produced in Southern Laos are unique and beautiful items, and are mostly made from textiles, bamboo or wood. In Pakse, you can find souvenir shops and an art gallery but you may also find crafts being sold from small stalls or by individual producers along the way. Never hesitate to stop and buy!



Laos Wind Trace Art Museum

The most prominent handicrafts are made of silk or cotton and are woven in different styles and qualities. Bamboo weavings are used to make traditional Lao utensils such as the famous sticky rice basket but you can also find bamboo bags, purses or small pencil holders. Woodcarvings have their origin in Ban Nong Bueng Village, see → Xe Pian. Other nice take-home souvenirs include coffee and tea from cafés in town or directly from the Bolaven Plateau.



If you buy local handicrafts and products you are supporting the artisans of the area and hence the local economy. Here a list of the main shops in Pakse.

- **Dream Weavers Shop** Products in this shop have been created and designed by survivors of trafficking and their families. By buying their products you help fight against human trafficking. Website www.villagefocus.org



Colourful textiles

- **Souvenir Shop at Forest Hotel** Products are from the One District One Product Project, supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency and help producers gain better access to the market. Website www.odop.info
- **Pakse Souvenirs** Products come from all over Laos, and you can find textiles from the North and South. The owner is also a designer and uses old textiles to make unique bags and belts, for example.
- **Souphavady Handicrafts** This shop offers mainly textiles and woodcarvings.
- **Monument Books** Here you can find books (in English and French) about Laos and the surrounding countries, travel books, maps, novels, and postcards. Website www.monument-books.com/laos.php
- **Laos Wind Trace Art Museum** About 7km from the town centre following Road 13 South, you will find an art gallery beautifully located in the woods. They have Korean and Laos Exchange Exhibitions including paintings from the students at the Art School in Pakse.



VAT PHOU AND CHAMPASAK TOWN. ANCIENT AND MODERN CULTURES.

Immerse yourself in a variety of eras from early, classical Khmer architecture (7th-12th century) through French colonial buildings (19th-20th century) to Buddhist temples and local village life, including shadow puppeteers of the present day. The area of Vat Phou and Champasak invite you to explore a diverse cultural landscape.

Set in stunning natural surroundings, Vat Phou, the ancient Khmer temple complex, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, is the main attraction in the area, but there is much more to be discovered. It is worth staying in the charming town of Champasak where you can discover French colonial buildings, Buddhist temples, or simply enjoy an evening in the Shadow Puppet Theatre. You could also take a relaxing massage at the Spa or take a boat to the Mekong island of Don Daeng to relax in its tranquil environment and discover local village life on a bicycle.





How to get there From Pakse you can take a local bus leaving from Daoheuang market. You can also take a bus or minivan that heads to/comes from the Four Thousand Islands and get off at Ban Muang. Take a ferry across the Mekong to Ban Phaphin, a few hundred metres north of the centre of Champasak. You can also rent a motorbike, a car and a driver, organise a tuk tuk, join a tour, or organise a boat from Pakse to Champasak.

Where to stay In Champasak you can find a range of accommodation options, from low-budget guesthouses to up-market hotels, along the two main parallel roads running through the centre of the city. The upmarket River Resort can be found just a few kilometres north of town. You can also stay on Don Daeng Island, either in La Folie Lodge or in a basic community guesthouse or homestay.



MAP LEGEND

Tourist Amenities

-  Tourist information
-  Hotel
-  Homestay
-  Spa



Culture

-  Temple
-  Church
-  Historical monument
-  Theatre

Nature

-  Waterfall

Transportation

-  Boat landing
-  Cycling



On the track of ancient Khmer culture

VAT PHOU. ANGKOR WAT'S COUSIN IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.

The unique layout of Khmer architecture found at Vat Phou gained it the UNESCO World Heritage label in 2001 and makes it one of the highlights of any visit to Southern Laos. Although it is a small site compared to Angkor Wat, climbing Vat Phou's stairs in the shade of frangipani trees, while gazing down on a beautiful landscape gives the site a mystical atmosphere and makes it a worthwhile visit.

Vat Phou not only represents a historic site with ancient buildings, but according to historians, is also one of the world's best examples of the planning and engineering of a landscape that reflects the religious beliefs and economic approaches of both ancient Khmer architecture and the Hindu religion.

The Vat Phou temple complex is the cultural heart of a wider historical landscape on the plains of Champasak, ranging from the Mekong River to the Phou Kao



*Vat Phou in its
beautiful natural
setting*

Mountains. Temples, water channels, tanks, quarries, field systems, settlement sites, and the ancient road to Angkor Wat are other remains that have been found in the area.

Successive Khmer rulers and kings never forgot their origins and the importance of Vat Phou and made regular donations for maintenance. Later, Vat Phou became an active Buddhist sanctuary and remains so to this day. Every year, a pilgrimage takes place during the full moon in February and attracts many worshippers. It is known today as the **Vat Phou Festival** and is the largest festival in Southern Laos and one of the largest in the entire country, see → Festivals and Events.



The main temple, a sanctuary

How to get there Vat Phou is located about 10km from Champasak town, where you can rent a tuk tuk, motorbike or bicycle to get to the temple, or you can join an organised tour. You can also get there by renting a car or motorbike or joining an organised tour in Pakse, located about 45km away from Vat Phou.

Where to stay In Champasak town you can find a range of accommodation options, see previous page.

Facilities At the entrance to Vat Phou, there is a building with a museum containing a collection of objects, sculptures and architectural artefacts related to the temple. The museum is a good place to start exploring the temple's history before venturing into the site. There is an entrance fee of 50,000 kip (09/2015), and restrooms can be found in the building.

VAT PHOU HISTORICAL FACTS

Origin Inscriptions from the 5th and 6th century mention that a sanctuary was built on the hill. This building was later replaced by the religious temple complex we can see today and was established by the Khmer Empire which dominated the region from the 10th to 14th century.

UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2001

Unique feature The Vat Phou complex represents an outstanding testimony of a symbolic landscape of great spiritual significance embedded in stunning natural surroundings and expressing the Hindu vision of the relationship between nature and humanity.

Further information whc.unesco.org/en/list/481/ and vatphou-champassak.com/



WANDER AROUND CHAMPASAK'S CULTURAL AND HISTORIC LANDSCAPE.



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These thematic trails take you deep into Champasak's cultural and historic landscape away from well-travelled routes. Discover pre-Angkorian inscriptions in a small cave and an ancient city. Learn about rice farming and processing, immerse yourself in the diverse architecture of the town, and explore local village life along and across the Mekong River.

These four thematic trails invite you to discover relatively unknown archaeological sites in remote areas

- Vat Phou – Hong Nang Sida – Thao Tao
- Vat Phou – Oub Muong – Tham Lek
- Ancient City – Vat Luang Kao
- Ancient City – Vat Muang Kang

These four trails invite you to admire nature, culture, history and local life in Champasak

- Tomo Temple and local life across the Mekong
- Don Daeng Island
- Champasak town historic and local life trail
- Champasak's rice paddies



Architecture in Champasak. Former residence of the King of Champasak (above) and Vat Muang Kang, the temple (above), the library and the monks' residence (on the right).



The eight thematic trails are all walkable, but can also be done by bicycle or by motorbike while a few trails require a combination with a boat trip on the Mekong. All trails are best done in the company of a local guide but some have been designed for independent travellers.

For more information and bookings please contact

Vat Phou Museum

Opening hours Daily 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Phone Mr Soubanh +856 20 5576 9221

Email informations@vatphou-champassak.com

Website vatphou-champassak.com



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A unique experience, immerse and enjoy

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CULTURAL EVENING. VISIT CHAMPASAK'S SHADOW PUPPET THEATRE.

Shadow Puppetry is an ancient tradition with a long history in Southeast Asia. In Southern Laos, the Champasak Shadow Puppet Theatre has revived this long forgotten cultural tradition and with a group of 14 people including artists, musicians, vocalists, comedians and puppeteers, presents a choice of two intriguing shows.



© Yves Bernard

Shadow Puppetry. The Tale of Phralak-Phralam.

Get ready to depart on an adventure to the very heart of this Indian epic. Adapted from Ramayana with humour and respect for tradition, this show is a gateway to the Shadow Puppet Theatre of Champasak. The puppets are your guides to discover the original music and songs from Southern Laos, played live by the musicians. The Lum Siphandon song with its enchanting melody will literally take you upriver all the way from the Four Thousand Islands to Champasak.

Cinéma-TukTuk. Chang, once upon a time in the jungle.

Cooper and Schoedsack's movie captures fascinating scenes of everyday life in Northern Laos in the 1920s,



© Yves Bernard

Revival of an ancient tradition

when man had to fight to survive in a hostile environment and when nature could be friend or foe. This black and white silent movie is projected on a wide screen and accompanied by sound effects and live music from the musicians of the Shadow Puppets Theatre. This combination of live soundtrack and raw, authentic film material makes it a memorable experience.



© Yves Bernard

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Where Both spectacles take place in the centre of Champasak town

Times

- Shadow Puppetry every Tuesday/Friday 8:30 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.
- Cinéma-TukTuk every Wednesday/Saturday 8:30 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.

Information and booking

Contact Yves Bernard

Phone +856 20 5508 1109

Email ciam.laos@gmail.com

Website www.cinema-tuktuk.org

Facebook Théâtre d'Ombres de Champasak ATOC

With a lot of love, this old tradition has been brought back to life by a number of motivated people. The aim is to protect this cultural heritage and to foster cultural exchange between Laos and its visitors.



UNWIND AND RELAX. CHAMPASAK SPA AND DON DAENG.

After energetic excursions and adventures in and around Champasak, enjoy the town's laid-back atmosphere and spend time with its charming people to recharge your batteries and recover a sense of wellbeing and balance before moving on to your next adventure. Two things that help you do just this with a trip to the Champasak Spa and a visit to the island of Don Daeng.

Champasak Spa. The natural outdoor wellness centre in Southern Laos.

This charming Spa, located in a beautifully restored traditional wooden house on the banks of the Mekong River, creates a warm atmosphere and offers an ideal space to relax and re-energise. A trained and experienced team will take care of your needs and wishes and can apply a wide variety of massage techniques from China, Thailand and Laos that will provide you with a sensation of wellbeing.

The Spa was established in March 2009 as a privately financed development project with the aim of creating



Natural and organic products based on homemade recipes

long-term employment opportunities for local villagers and to contribute to and promote sustainable tourism in Champasak.

The Spa is specialised in the following tailor-made treatments

- Half-day and Full-day Wellness Packages
- 2 or 3 day Wellness Packages

The package of your choice can include a combination of these treatments: Traditional body massage, herbal body massage, herbal compress, organic body scrub, organic facial treatment, traditional Lao hair spa (oil treatment), or a coconut oil aroma body massage in a pavilion on the banks of the Mekong River.

All the products used at the Spa are natural and organic, and are based on homemade recipes made mostly with ingredients from the nearby villages. These products used as treatments are freshly prepared. A reservation in advance is highly recommended.

Book your package

Phone +856 20 5909 4061 or +856 20 5649 9739

Email contact@champasak-spa.com

Website www.champasak-spa.com

Facebook Champasak-Spa Projet de Développement durable Laos



The profits from sales of products flow into the creation of a fund for social and educational projects to the benefit of employees of the Spa and their families. The Spa has also been supporting several projects for the benefit of the local community.

DON DAENG. ENJOY THE LAID-BACK ATMOSPHERE OF A MEKONG RIVER ISLAND.

This beautiful island is located just across the Mekong River from Champasak. The tranquil environment is the perfect place to take a bicycle ride or stroll along tree-lined paths. You can stop along the way to try fresh fruit, coconut or sugar cane juice. Visit Buddhist temples, an ancient forest stupa located in the middle of the island, or walk along rice fields, as buffaloes, cows, and goats cross your path. Greet the local villagers as they slowly drive by on motorbikes or old mini tractors or stand on one of the beaches. Enjoy the laid-back atmosphere on this 8km long island.

Cycling routes For the cycling round trip start from the northern tip of Don Daeng, head towards the south (either along the west or east coast), after about 3 to 3.5km take the path that cuts through the middle of the island past Wat Pha (forest temple) until you reach the other side of Don Daeng and turn to head back towards the north to the starting point. Duration: approx. 2.5h. From the north you can also head south all along the west coast for about 6km and then follow the path leading to the east coast of the island to find yourself at a small beach (during dry season only). Or, make the full west coast of about 8km to get a feeling of the island's size.

How to get there Take a boat from Champasak. Ask at your guesthouse or restaurant or go to the Tourist Information Centre. You can also go directly to the pier at the northern edge of the village called "Phaphin", where the ferry crosses to Ban Muang and ask for a boat to Don Daeng. A ferry or a small boat will usually drop you at Ban Hua Don Daeng at the northern tip of the island where you will find a path that leads around the island.

Where to stay You can spend a night on Don Daeng, either in the basic community guesthouse, in a homestay, or in a comfortable bungalow of the up-market La Folie Lodge.



View from Don Daeng to Champasak

What to bring Although there are a few small shops in the north of the island it is advisable to bring some sun-protection, and some water for the start of your trip. It is also better if you bring a bicycle from Champasak as there are only a few available on the island. If you stay at La Folie Lodge, they have bicycles and can provide you with a cycling itinerary map. If you want to have a swim at one of the beaches, be careful of the current and see also → Do's and Don'ts.



Weaving textiles in
Tad Pasuam ethnic
model village

BOLAVEN PLATEAU. COFFEE, WATERFALLS AND ETHNIC VILLAGES.

The landscape of the Bolaven Plateau is characterised by coffee and tea plantations and dramatic waterfalls surrounded by lush vegetation. Various ethnic groups inhabit the area. Historically, the Laven dominated the region, but nowadays other ethnic groups such as the Alak, Katu, Ta-oy and Suay also reside in the area. Situated in the highlands at an elevation ranging from 1,000 to 1,350 metres above sea level, the cooler climate is a great relief from the heat during the hot season.

Immerse yourself in the coffee production process and visit plantations. You will discover stunning waterfalls where you can cool off in the clear water, or take a gentle trek and visit an ethnic village. If you feel like a more adrenaline-fuelled trip and want to challenge yourself, register for the amazing Tree Top Explorer trip or rent a motorcycle and ride around the small Bolaven loop on your own.

How to get there You can book an organised tour or a driver at any of the travel agents in Pakse. If you prefer to make your own plans, you can rent a motorbike or a car (with or without a driver). If you have more time and need less comfort, you can also use public transport, as there are daily buses to Paksong, Salavan and Sekong. They can drop you off at any point, so just ask. Get schedules and tickets at any of the travel agents in Pakse.

Where to stay Accommodation and food facilities are mainly located in Paksong and Tad Lo. You can also find resorts near some of the waterfalls and along the road, or basic homestays on the way.

What to bring Swimsuit (see → Do's and Don'ts), sunscreen lotion, a raincoat, and a fleece as it can get cool.



MAP LEGEND

Tourist Amenities

-  Hotel
-  Coffee
-  Shopping

Culture

-  Handicraft

Nature

-  Waterfall
-  Elephant riding

FROM THE TREE TO THE CUP. COFFEE ALL THE WAY.

The Bolaven Plateau hosts the country's main coffee plantations and tea gardens. The ample rainfall, cool temperatures and rich volcanic soil provide ideal conditions for world-class Arabica and Robusta coffee to grow. You can explore the plantations, learn about the process of coffee production and even participate in a coffee roasting workshop.

You have several different options for your coffee plantation visit. Below you will find some recommendations of tours that have a positive social impact thanks to the support of local smallholder farmers. Your participation can directly contribute to improving their livelihoods.



All about coffee

One-day tour with the Bolaven Plateau Coffee Producers Cooperative (CPC)

On this tour you will learn from smallholders how high quality, organic, and fair trade certified coffee gets from the tree to the cup.

- Visit a coffee plantation and pick coffee beans with farmers
- Bring the beans to the CPC wet processing centre where the coffee is pulped, fermented, washed, dried and packed
- Enjoy lunch in a traditional stilt house with a local family
- Have a refreshing swim in the Tad Yuang waterfall
- Stop at the CPC factory to learn about the dispatch of the coffee for export
- Finish with a coffee tasting in the CPC laboratory

CPC one-day tours are organised every **Tuesday and Thursday** during the coffee season that lasts from **November to March**.

Booking and information

Contact CPC office in Pakse, **Phone** +856 3121 4126

Email cpclaos.coffeetour@gmail.com

Website www.cpc-laos.org

Facebook CPC – The Bolaven Plateau Coffee Producers Cooperative

All profits from this tour will directly benefit the CPC members and their communities.



© CPC/Micka Perier

A THREE-HOUR TOUR WITH JHAI COFFEE HOUSE

The Jhai Coffee House is a philanthropic coffee roaster and café located in Paksong, on the Bolaven Plateau, right at the source of coffee production. Jhai educates farmers on specialty coffee practices, purchases coffee directly from farmers and invests 100 % of profits into clean water and hygiene solutions at schools within the community.

Learn what it takes to get a cup of coffee.

- Pick coffee beans
- Meet the farmers
- Process coffee
- Visit the warehouse
- Learn to roast
- Enjoy a free cup of coffee



Join a tour to learn more about the process of coffee production

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The Jhai Coffee House runs tours every day when staff is available. Tours require a minimum of two people. The best time to visit is during coffee harvesting season from November to February, with tours usually running from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. There are shorter tours of 45 minutes during the rest of the year that will not include visits to the warehouse or the farm.

Tours are by appointment only, so please book in advance by contacting Jackie Thao (Lao and English) and Tyson Adams (English)

Phone/Whatsapp +856 20 9767 2424 (Jackie Thao)

Whatsapp +12064916784 (Tyson Adams)

Email jackiethao@gmail.com and tyson@jhaicoffeehouse.com

Website www.jhaicoffeehouse.com

Facebook Jhai Coffee House

Jhai invests 100% of its profits into water and hygiene solutions at schools within the community.



Pick coffee beans with farmers
© CPC/Micka Perier

OTHER INTERESTING OPTIONS FOR YOUR COFFEE EXPERIENCE

Sinouk Coffee Resort

The resort is located on the Paksong-Thateng road and is surrounded by a beautiful garden and natural rivers. It has a restaurant and café and offers charming rooms to stay overnight. Visitors can enjoy the coffee plantation and coffee processing guided tour. For more information please contact Mr. Philippe:

Phone +856 30 955 8960 or mobile +856 20 5916 7355

Email sinoukcoffeeresort@gmail.com

Website www.sinoukcoffeeresort.com

Mr. Koffie's workshops and tours at Tad Fane Resort

Located at the stunning Tad Fane waterfall, the famous Mr. Koffie offers coffee workshops and tours. For more information visit the **Website** www.paksong.info or make arrangements in advance.

Phone/Whatsapp +856 20 2276 0439

Email coffee@paksong.info

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Small producers

Another opportunity to learn about local coffee production exists in the form of small-scale coffee plantations found along the roadside, where visitors are always welcome. These small-scale, locally owned and operated plantations offer both tea and coffee tasting and the opportunity to buy coffee or tea to take home as gifts or to enjoy yourself. So why not stop, have a tasty cup of coffee, and have a chat with the local farmers.

LAO COFFEE

Coffee has been grown in Southern Laos for almost 100 years. The first coffee plantations on the Bolaven Plateau were set up by French settlers around 1920, and were mainly found along the roads built by the colonial administration. Coffee rapidly became the main crop in the area. Settlers grew Arabica trees exclusively. Around 1940, local farmers also started to grow coffee.

Lao coffee's international reputation was built on high-quality washed Arabica from Bourbon and Typica (1920-1950). Between 1950 and 1990, due to external factors such as war and disease, Arabica was progressively replaced by Robusta. Since 1990, Arabica is being reintroduced.

Production 30,000 tonnes (2013/14)

Plantations 75,000 ha (2014)

Type of coffee Robusta and Arabica

Further information laocoffeeassociation.org, www.laocoffeeboard.org

A LAND OF DIVERSITY. DISCOVER WATERFALLS AND ETHNIC VILLAGES.

Thanks to the unique geology and climate of the Bolaven Plateau, a large number of rivers cross the highlands, regularly turning into scenic waterfalls on their way. Many of these waterfalls are now accessible by gravel or paved roads and offer basic to resort-style facilities. The waterfalls are a great reason to explore the area but you can easily combine a visit to some falls with a trekking adventure, including stopping at ethnic minority villages, or simply enjoy the tranquillity of the lush vegetation.



Tad Fane waterfall

Find below a selection of accessible waterfalls that offer basic facilities. At most waterfalls, you will pay an entrance and parking fee. These are the recommended stops **along Route E16 to Paksong** (go straight on at the intersection at Ban Huayhe at 21km when driving from Pakse)

Sabaidee Valley (33km)

At the Sabaidee Valley you will find the biggest souvenir shop in Southern Laos, a cosy café serving the locally grown coffee, a restaurant serving Thai-Chinese-Lao food, as well as comfortable up-market accommodation (sabaideevalley.com).

Tad Itou (35km)

Tad Itou is a powerful waterfall set amongst lush tropical vegetation. The E-TU Waterfall resort (baanetuwaterfallresort.com), located right next to the waterfall, offers comfortable bungalows and a restaurant. There are also picnic facilities where you can appreciate the waterfall from the top. Some steep stairs take you down to the pool at the bottom of the cascade

Tad Fane (38km)

Tad Fane waterfall is located within the Dong Hua Sao National Protected Area. Two rivers converge here to form the impressive 120 metre high waterfall. You can enjoy the view from the restaurant or stay at the resort in a cabin-like bungalow. There are some trekking options to explore the Dong Hua Sao National Park. For more



Tad Yuang waterfall

information you can ask at the Tad Fane resort. For coffee tasting or workshops read the section above.

Tad Champee (38km)

The access road to Tad Champee is just opposite Tad Fane. It is a scenic waterfall where you can relax on one of a number of wooden benches or on a natural round boulder situated around the waterfall. Have a picnic or a swim, and enjoy the tranquillity of the area. See → Do's and Don'ts.

Tad Yuang (40km)

The site of the stunning Tad Yuang invites you to explore the waterfall from different perspectives. Follow a path to reach the lookout points at the top, middle or bottom of the waterfall. There is a picnic area at the top of the waterfall where you can have lunch. If you are brave and prepared, you could also have a swim. See → Do's and Don'ts.

Coffee shop and garden (40km)

Just next to the access road to Tad Yuang, a small coffee shop offers visits to their coffee and tea plantations and to their garden with pepper, avocado, blackberries, strawberries, cacao and others local products, depending on the season. You can taste their delicious tea or a cup of coffee and purchase their products.



Tad Lo waterfall

You will also find waterfalls **along Route 20 to Salavan** (turn left at the intersection at Ban Huayhe at 21km when coming from Pakse)

Tad Pasuam and an ethnic model village (34km)

This majestic waterfall gets its name from its rectangular shape, "suam" literally meaning room in Lao. The beauty of the waterfall and the site makes for a relaxing afternoon. Enjoy a picnic, or lunch and a drink in the restaurant of the Uttayan Bachieng Resort. You can also visit the ethnic model village nearby where you will discover housing styles from different ethnic groups and see some handicrafts in the making.

Katu textiles – Ban Houay Houn Village, trekking and homestay (60km)

Stop at the sign for Katu textiles, where you will be able to discover this village's handicrafts and local products. The staff can also organise a trek in the surrounding area or a basic homestay for you. **Mr. Vieng Homestay** also offers trekking, homestays and freshly brewed coffee.

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Tad Lo (84km)

In Ban Saen Nang Village, also known as Tad Lo, you can find a selection of basic accommodation and restaurants. It is worth staying and exploring the area, as there are several waterfalls including Tad Hang, Tad Lo and Tad Suong. You can swim in some of the pools near the waterfalls, please see → Do's and Don'ts. In the evening you might observe elephants taking their bath just above the Tad Lo waterfall. There are also trekking options and you can organise a hike with a local guide to waterfalls and ethnic villages in the surrounding area. The **Tad Soung Waterfall Circuit** is a community-based tourism project, consisting of a one-day trek led by the Tad Lo Guides Association. You will have the chance to explore the beauty of the forest and pristine natural surroundings, and learn about the culture and lifestyle of local villages. For more information ask at the Tourist Information Centre, in your guesthouse or at a restaurant.

WHEN ADVENTURE CALLS. TREE TOP EXPLORER AND BOLAVEN LOOP.

Embark on a different journey in the highlands of Southern Laos. Immerse yourself in an outdoor jungle adventure where you can climb the 'via ferrata', zip-line in front of scenic waterfalls and walk amongst the forest canopy. If biking is more your thing, simply embark on a two-wheel road trip around the Bolaven loop.

Jungle Adventure. Tree Top Explorer.

This jungle adventure in the highlands blends fun with a real natural outdoor experience. The site can only be reached on foot with a trek through coffee plantations and lush forests. The main attraction is a system of zip-lines traversing steep gorges within touching distance of the waterfalls. A 'via ferrata' tests your adventurous spirit and may challenge you to your limits. All is safe and manageable though, even for the most fearful. On the canopy walkway you will get a chance to experience the forest from a completely different angle.

Officially opened in early 2011, Tree Top Explorer received praise for its environmentally friendly approach, for the active involvement of local communities and for the protection of wildlife by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN, Netherlands).

INFORMATION AND BOOKINGS AT ANY GREEN DISCOVERY OFFICE IN LAOS OR

Green Discovery office in Pakse, open every day
8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Phone +856 21 264 680 or +856 31 252 908

Email treetop@greendiscoverylaos.com

Website www.treetoplaos.com and
www.greendiscoverylaos.com



Adrenaline adventure in a stunning natural environment

Thanks to the Tree Top Explorer, people in the surrounding communities find part time employment and are able to diversify their incomes.





Visiting the Tad Pasuam ethnic model village

Rent a motorbike and head off on a journey around the small Bolaven loop.

If you are an experienced motorcycle rider, you might want to explore the Bolaven on your own. It is a good way to discover and immerse in this land of diversity. Take your time, stop and stay overnight near one of the stunning waterfalls.

Though still rather basic, the infrastructure and facilities include a good paved main road with some dirt roads leading to the waterfalls. You can find petrol stations, restaurants, resorts, guesthouses, homestays, coffee shops and fruit stalls along the route. Read through the previous pages to find the hidden gems.

The small loop is approximately 200 kilometres in total. Starting in Pakse – Ban Huayhe – Paksong – Thatheng – Ban Beng (Tad Lo) – Katu village – Ban Huayhe – Pakse. Or, the other way round.

Information and rental

You can rent motorbikes in Pakse, where Miss Noy (Road 13, city centre, phone +856 20 2227 2278) is probably the best-known person to rent from, but you can also rent motorbikes from many other operators in town. The loop can also be done by car or bicycle, with the latter for more active and advanced cyclists (best with your own mountain bike). Car rental opportunities can again be found in Pakse.

Don't forget to bring a map (from the rental shop or in this booklet), a raincoat, and a sweater for the cooler climate. Please be warned that it is mandatory by law and highly recommended to wear a helmet. Drive slowly and carefully! Park in a safe place and lock your bike.



Tad Champee waterfall

FOUR THOUSAND ISLANDS. EMBARK ON A DIFFERENT RHYTHM OF LIFE.

Si Phan Don means Four Thousand Islands, and is a unique river archipelago situated in the Mekong River near the Cambodian border. It is a place to unwind and experience traditional river-side village life.

Immerse yourself in the local pace of life, cycle through the traditional fishing villages or walk through rice paddies and explore the stunning waterfalls. Kayak along the Mekong to spot the rare and endangered Irrawaddy Dolphins, or simply relax in a hammock while watching local fishermen artistically throw their nets out during the magical sunsets that occur most evenings in this part of the world.

If you wish to delve deeper into local life, go on a Mekong River Life Excursion and experience the local culture. For those of you interested in history, there are remnants from French colonial times that can be discovered and can inform you about the past. The Four Thousand Islands is a truly serene place, so come and stay.

How to get there If you want to go by public transport, buses and tourist minivans leave daily from Pakse in the morning to Muang Khong and Ban Nakasang. There are also songthaews, local semi-open buses, from the Southern Bus Terminal. From Cambodia there is a daily bus connection and organised transport by minivan. If you prefer private transport you can rent a car with a driver or book a tour with a travel agent. At Ban Nakasang, you can take a boat to one of the islands, and the boatmen can drop you at the guesthouse of your choice.

Where to stay You can stay on three islands namely, Don Det, Don Khon and Don Khong. Each island has its own flavour. Don Khong has a number of up-market hotels and resorts in Ban Muang Khong. Don Khon is a quiet island with a mix of mid-to-upmarket accommodation. Don Det is known for attracting young backpackers with relatively cheap bungalows.

What to bring Time to relax, sun protection, swimsuit, please see → Do's and Don'ts. Respect the local culture and dress appropriately when walking through the village.





MAP LEGEND

Tourist Amenities

 Tourist information

 Hotel

Culture

 Historical monument

Nature

 Waterfall

 Dolphin watching

Transportation

 Border crossing

 Boat landing



MEKONG RIVER LIFE EXCURSION. EMBARK ON A RIVER JOURNEY.

*Embark and
experience traditional
river village life*

This excursion is an invitation from local villagers for you to discover and immerse yourself in their culture and lifestyle.

You'll be taken by boat through the maze of channels that wind their way around the Four Thousand Islands. You will get a sense of the sheer size of the area, and you may be able to spot water buffalo or other animals along the way, so keep an eye out! Disembark on one of the less explored islands and wander through a village where you will visit a temple to discover the importance of Buddhism. Learn how villagers weave fishing nets, make colourful sticky rice baskets, and how they cook tasty sticky rice.

The tour includes

- Transport by boat (incl. life jackets)
- Guided visit to one of the islands (in English)
- Drinking water and seasonal fruit



This trip can be arranged for small groups of up to a maximum of five people. This is to ensure that a meaningful cultural exchange can occur between the tourists and the villagers.

What to bring As you will meet villagers, monks and fishermen, please wear appropriate clothing and ensure you cover your shoulders and knees. In addition, you may want to bring sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat.

Since this is a new tour (2015), the tour guide would appreciate your feedback on the trip so to further improve the experience for future visitors. It would be very helpful if you could return the questionnaire you will receive at the end of the tour.

Information and bookings

Mr. Vixay, Wonderful Tours

Phone +856 20 5581 4925

This excursion has been developed with and for the benefit of the local community



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ON THE TRAIL OF NATURAL TRANQUILLITY. ISLAND HOPPING BY BICYCLE.

One of the best ways to discover the Four Thousand Islands is by bicycle. Pedal along small paths next to the Mekong and learn how local villagers spend their days on the river. Walk along rice fields, visit temples, keep an eye out for historical remains, and bask in the beauty of the waterfalls. Stop for drinks or snacks along the way and practice your Lao with the locals.

Watch how families fix fishing nets or prepare food or handicrafts in the shade of their traditional houses, and marvel at the river gardens and home garden beds built on stilts while herbs grow in pots of all shapes and sizes. On Don Khong you might even come across a family producing palm sugar, or see rice paper drying in the sun before it's processed into noodles.



Pedal along small paths of the Four Thousand Islands

60 You can either explore one island or combine it with visits to others. Don Khon and Don Det are connected by an old French bridge, which makes it easy to travel between the two islands. If you are on Don Khong and would like to go down to Don Det or Don Khon you can ask at your guesthouse or restaurant, ask a local travel agent or a boatman to take you and your bicycle down the Mekong River to these other islands.

If you have extra time you can visit other islands such as Don Som, but be aware that there are no facilities, such as accommodation, restaurants and so on, available on islands other than the three main ones mentioned above.

Where to rent a bicycle You can rent simple bicycles on Don Det, Don Khon and Don Khong. Tours can be booked with local travel agents on the islands or in Pakse.

When to go It's better if you leave early in the morning or later in the afternoon to avoid cycling during the hottest hours of the day.

What to bring Sunscreen, and some water. You can also buy some basic supplies in small shops along the path.



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IN SEARCH OF WATERFALLS AND LEGENDS. KHONE PHAPHENG AND LII PHII.

Khone Phapheng Waterfall

Locals often refer to Khone Phapheng waterfall as the jewel or the pearl of the Mekong, as it is Southeast Asia's largest waterfall. Millions of litres of water descend over a set of cascades making it one of the most spectacular sites in Southern Laos.

The "Manikoth tree" at the entrance to the site is very famous. The tree used to stand on a rock in the middle of the waterfall, but toppled over in 2012 due to flooding. The public wanted to save it, as according to an ancient epic poem adapted from the Ramayana, the tree has supernatural powers. After several attempts, the tree was finally brought on safe shores by a helicopter.



*Lii Pii waterfall (above)
Khone Phapheng
waterfall (right, top),
Local fisherman with
the famous fish trap
(right, bottom)*

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How to get there From Pakse it is 150km south on Road 13 and only 13km from the Cambodian border. You can go by minivan or car or arrange a tour. From the islands you can organise transport with local travel agents. Opening hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Entrance fee 55,000 kip (09/2015).

Lii Phii also known as Somphamit Waterfall

This beautiful natural location is the perfect place to relax. You can follow paths to enjoy different views of the waterfall. You can take a picnic, have a drink in the bar near the sandy beach and even have a swim there, but be careful that you don't go too far out!

The waterfall is also often called Lii Phii. As the legend goes, the name Lii Phii was given to the area due to the fact that it was considered to be a giant fish trap (Lii) not only for fish, but also for ghosts and dead people (Phii). Therefore, watch your step and be careful if you go into the water.

How to get there You can visit this waterfall from Don Khon, where a small bridge takes you to the tiny Don Lai Island. The site is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Entrance fee 25,000 kip (09/2015).



KAYAK ALONG THE MAZE OF CHANNELS. LOOK OUT FOR RARE IRRAWADDY DOLPHINS.

Why not immerse yourself in the natural beauty of the area and silently kayak through the waters of the Four Thousand Islands? As you slowly paddle, you will gain a true insight into the size and character of this unique place. Let a guide take you to the pool where you can spot the rare and endangered Irrawaddy Dolphins.

Alternatively, if you are not comfortable with kayaking, you can charter a boat that can bring you down to the dolphin pool, or you can take a tour around the islands.

In order to not stress the dolphins, the guides have been trained not to go too close. Drivers will go slowly and carefully. The best is when they turn off the motor, be as quiet as possible on the boat and enjoy this very special moment. When visiting the dolphin pool please do not chase the dolphins, do not throw anything into the river. The dolphins are very rare and we urge you to treat them with the upmost respect.

Information and bookings You can rent kayaks and book tours with local travel agents on the island, in Pakse or in Vientiane. Mr. Pan's Guesthouse on Don Khon seems to be good place to get information and bookings can also be made here.

When to go The best time is early in the morning. It is easier to spot them during the dry season in the so-called dolphin pool area. Late afternoon towards sunset can also be a good time.



Slowly gliding through the maze of channels of the Four Thousand Islands.

THE IRRAWADDY DOLPHINS

The rare, Mekong River Irrawaddy dolphins inhabit a 190km stretch of the river between Cambodia and Laos. 85 individuals are estimated to still be alive, but only five are left in Laos (2015). These low numbers have caused the dolphin to be classified as Critically Endangered. Nicknamed the “smiling face of the Mekong”, the population of these small dolphins has been plummeting in recent decades mainly due to dangerous fishing practices. Further threats are dam construction and overfishing.

For further information wwf.panda.org



XE PIAN NATIONAL PROTECTED AREA. WETLANDS AND ELEPHANTS.

The Xe Pian National Protected Area (NPA), established in 1993 and covering an area of 2,400 square kilometres, is considered to be one of the top three most biologically important protected areas in Laos. Rare wildlife species can be found in unique habitats, including wetlands with large water birds and areas of lowland forests hosting large mammals.

Venture into the area to enjoy ecotourism activities while knowing that your support helps to provide opportunities for local villagers. You can ride on the back of an elephant, opt for some trekking in the forest, canoe with a local guide through the wetlands in the rainy season, or simply relax and observe life in the wetlands.

How to get there Ban Kiet Ngong is located around 57km south of Pakse. You can travel by local bus that leaves Pakse from the Southern Bus Station at kilometre 8 once a day. If you wish to get there faster and more comfortably, travel agents in Pakse can organise transport or a private tour for you. If you are adventurous, you can take a public bus that heads to the Four Thousand Islands on Road 13 and ask to get off at kilometre 48 at Ban That Beng Village. From here travel east along Road 18 for 7km and then turn right at the signpost for Kiet Ngong, which is a further 1.5km down the road. The access road is still unpaved and it can therefore be challenging to get to in the rainy season.

Where to stay You can stay in a comfortable bungalow or an eco-room at the up-market Kingfisher Ecolodge, in a homestay, or in a simple community guesthouse.

Information and bookings All treks in Xe Pian NPA should be undertaken with a local guide. To book a locally guided tour, visit the Tourist Information Office in Pakse or book directly with Kiet Ngong villagers (+856 30 955 2121 Lao speakers only). Alternatively contact Kingfisher Ecolodge, Green Discovery or other local tour companies.



BAN KIET NGONG. ELEPHANT RIDES TO PHOU ASA.

Located at the edge of the wetlands, Ban Kiet Ngong Village, with its traditional houses, temples and working elephants, offers a fascinating window to authentic rural life. The village, with a population of about 1,000 inhabitants, has always had a relationship of working with elephants. Hurry up, as only five elephants are left, and the traditional lifestyle is changing rapidly!

Why don't you join an elephant trek and venture into the forest or walk to the top of Phou Asa? Ride on an elephant's back from Ban Kiet Ngong Village to the rocky summit of Phou Asa and visit the mysterious ruins of a temple whose history is still yet to be fully documented. Enjoy stunning views over the wetlands, the forests of the Xe Pian NPA and the Bolaven Plateau. You can also take elephant rides to other nearby forests and wetlands.



Archaeological site on Phou Asa

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If you have always wanted to become an Elephant Rider, Kingfisher Ecolodge can help make your dream come true as they provide one-day training courses with local village mahouts in Ban Kiet Ngong. They can also organise a one day Elephant Safari for a special jungle adventure taking across paddy fields and wetlands before you enter the jungle.

Information and bookings Book at least one day in advance, as villagers and elephants need to get ready. You can book directly through the villagers from Ban Kiet Ngong (+856 30 955 2121 Lao speakers only), the Tourist Information Office or with travel agents in Pakse and Vientiane. Kingfisher Ecolodge also facilitates bookings, www.kingfishercolodge.com.

THE ASIAN ELEPHANT

The Asian Elephant is an officially endangered species. Numbers have dropped significantly over the last couple of years and it is estimated that now there are fewer than 30,000 worldwide. Laos, once called "The Land of a Million Elephants", is now home to less than 1,500 elephants. Approximately one third of them are privately owned and most of them are domesticated to work in the logging industry. The remaining elephants are used in the tourism sector.

Further information www.elefantasia.org and wwf.panda.org



A mahout in the wetlands

© Kingfisher Ecolodge

CLOSER TO THE GROUND. FOREST TREKKING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING.

There are also some interesting half-day or full-day trekking options. Discover the tropical forest, and learn about medicinal and edible plants, as well as non-timber forest products. Follow mysterious animal tracks and finally savour the stunning views from Phou Asa.

There is also a mountain biking option to Dong Hua Sao National Protected Area. It is a one-day trip to Lao Gna Village, followed by a forest walk and a picnic lunch with villagers. Afterwards you can trek to one or more of the waterfalls in the Dong Hua Sao NPA and swim in the refreshing clear waters that descend from the Bolaven Plateau before your return to Ban Kiet Ngong. This trip is only possible in the dry season.

Information and bookings Kingfisher Ecolodge organises forest trekking and mountain biking (in the dry season only) and also rents mountain bikes for a day to explore the village and surrounding area on your own. Bookings for trekking can also be made through the villagers (+856 30 955 2121 Lao speakers only), the Tourist Information Office in Pakse or travel agents in Pakse and Vientiane.

Around Ban Kiet Ngong



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© Kingfisher Ecology

PATHOUMPHONE WETLANDS – BEUNG KIAT NGONG RAMSAR SITE

These large non-flowing wetlands are among the most threatened habitats in Laos. Beung Kiat Ngong and the surrounding wetlands cover an area of about 24 square kilometres under the current Ramsar boundaries. It is only a small part of a larger complex wetland system that even extends over the border to Cambodia.

For further information www.iucn.org



BAN NONG BUENG. SOUTHERN LAOS' WOODCARVING VILLAGE.

Ban Nong Bueng is a traditional woodcarving village that has managed to pass on ancient woodcarving skills from one generation to the next. The traditional wood carving techniques used here originate from the Ta Oy ethnic group that used to live in the highlands of Southern Laos. Their products are all hand made in Nong Bueng Village and sold on the domestic and international market. You are more than welcome to visit the village and meet the artisans while they work. Feel free to look at the woodcarvings and don't forget to buy some souvenirs!

How to get there On the way to/from Ban Kiet Ngong Village or the Four Thousand Islands Visit Ban Nong Bueng wood carving village (43km south of Pakse on Road 13).



Carving unique wooden statues and doors



A means of transport, the famous tuk tuk

ESSENTIALS FOR SOUTHERN LAOS

GETTING THERE AND AROUND

Southern Laos is directly accessible from Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Vientiane, the capital of Laos. It can be reached by air and road.

By Air

Pakse International Airport (PKZ) Lao Airlines (www.laoairlines.com) offers domestic flights (to/ from Vientiane, Savannakhet, Luang Prabang) and international flights (to/from Siem Reap, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh). Visas are available on arrival at the airport (see → Visas and border checkpoints).

Alternatively, you can fly to Ubon Ratchathani Airport (UBP) in Thailand and travel by bus, taxi or public transport to Pakse (it takes about 2.5 to 3 hours). Cross the border at Chong Mek-Vang Tao (visa available on arrival).

By Bus

There are international bus services from/to Vietnam (Da Nang, Hue), Cambodia (Phnom Penh, Siem Reap), and Thailand (Ubon Ratchathani, Bangkok).



Pakse is Southern Laos' transportation hub and from here you can find connections to many destinations. It is advisable to get tickets at your hotel, a restaurant, or at one of the travel agencies in Pakse's town centre along Road 13, or on one of its side streets. Tickets usually include transfer to the terminal or pick-up at your hotel or guesthouse, but it would be wise to confirm this when you purchase your ticket.

For tickets to smaller, or more off-the-beaten-track destinations, you will have to go to the respective bus station and purchase them directly just before travelling. Pakse has several bus stations, but the two most important are the **Northern Bus Terminal** (7km north of Pakse, on Road 13, for connections to the north) and the **Southern Bus Terminal** (8km south of Pakse, on Road 13, for connections to the south and east including the Bolaven Plateau and Attapeu).

There are several other bus terminals in central Pakse. The **King of Bus Terminal** (Thanon 11, operates VIP night buses to/from Vientiane as well as some other bus services towards the north along Road 13 including Ban Saphai.) The **Morning Market Bus Station** (Daoheuang Market, on Road 38, has songthaews heading to/from several destinations in the surroundings of Pakse, including minivans to the Thai border), and the Evening Market Bus Station (2km, along Road 13, has services to/from Attapeu, Salavan, Sekong.)

Getting Around

There are several ways to get around in Southern Laos.

- Local (public) transport bus, songthaew (small semi-open bus), samlor (motorcycle with side car)
- Tourist bus (bus or minivan organised by travel agents)
- Charter a tuk tuk (a fun way to see town as well as the surrounding area)
- Charter a boat or a luxurious Mekong River Cruise (www.vatphou.com)
- Rent a car (with or without a driver)
- Rent a motorbike It is highly recommended and required by law to wear a helmet! Drive slowly and carefully! Park in a safe place and lock your bike.
- Rent a bicycle → read below Cycling routes
- Join a tour book with local travel agents → read below Travel agents



The songthaews, a local small semi-open bus



The samlor, a motorcycle with sidecar



Cycling routes

Southern Laos is an up and coming cycling destination. It is advisable to bring your own bicycle if you want to do any extended or advanced cycling. For shorter rides you can rent basic city bicycles in Pakse (even some mountain bikes), Champasak, Four Thousand Islands, and Ban Kiet Ngong. Below, you will find a selection of interesting tours, but for more details please visit www.southern-laos.com

Cycling through the charming nature of Southern Laos

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Island hopping on Si Phan Don Cycle around some very remote and authentic islands between Don Khong and the islands of Don Det and Don Khon.

Distance and cycling time 72km, 3 days, or around 15 hours.



Exploring the biggest island – Don Khong Take an anti-clockwise ride around the island starting on paved roads from Muang Khong and continue along for an adventurous off-road experience to Don San.

Distance and cycling time 45km, or around 3.5 hours



Extended Rural Mekong River Tour Road and off-road biking on both sides of the mighty Mekong River between Pakse and Champasak.

Distance and cycling time 77 to 125km, 2 days, or around 6.5 to 9.5 hours

Off-road adventure from Paksong to Tad Lo (via Ban Lao Ngam) Depending on the season and weather conditions, a manageable and enjoyable ride, or a challenging almost unmanageable trip.

Distance and cycling time 60km, or around 7 hours

Rewarding tour on the Bolaven Plateau (followed by a speedy downhill) This is a lovely ride along the top of the Bolaven, starting at Sinouk Coffee Resort. Take a break in Paksong and then head downhill towards the Mekong to arrive in Pakse.

Distance and cycling time 92km, or around 3.5 hours

Travel agents

Booking tours through one of the local travel agents is a good way to explore Southern Laos. With local guides you can learn about the culture, the way of life and get a better understanding of the country. Travel agents can book tours with foreign language guides, arrange cars or private vans, and they can purchase airline and bus tickets to destinations in and outside Southern Laos.

In addition to travel agents, there are also local guide services. The Tourist Information Office in Pakse can arrange for locally guided trips to community-based tourism sites in the surrounding areas.

Visas and Border checkpoints

All visitors entering Laos must possess a valid passport (with at least 6 months remaining validity). **A 30-day visa in advance of arrival** is available at the Lao Embassy or Consulate in your country.

At international airports in Laos and at the following international borders in the South, a **30-day visa on arrival** is also available (visa fees vary between US\$30-45, depending on your country of origin), bring passport size photos

- Laos-Thailand border (Vang Tao-Chong Mek)
- Laos-Cambodia border (Nong Nok Khian-Trapaeng Kriel)
- Laos-Vietnam borders (Phou Keua-Bo Y and Dansavanh-Lao Bao)



Bike adventure in the rainy season



The Laos-Thailand and Laos-Vietnam borders usually operate from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and the Laos-Cambodia border is open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. When crossing the border after 4:30 p.m., on weekends and on official public holidays, an overtime fee of around 10,000kip will be charged.

In case of questions you can contact the Tourist Information Office in Pakse and visit the website of The Department of Immigration in Lao PDR, www.immigration.gov.la. Visa extensions for temporary visitors can be obtained at the Police office in Pakse, a fee of US\$2 per day will be charged. When leaving Lao PDR, please make sure you observe and follow the visa requirements of the respective countries.

Note that there is a Vietnamese consulate in Pakse (www.vietnamconsulate-pakse.org/en).

Health and Safety

Healthcare in Laos is still basic. Precautionary measures to stay well include eating only well cooked food, drinking bottled water, staying hydrated, using sun protection, and avoiding mosquito bites.

Significant numbers of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) – bombs, artillery and mortar shells that did not explode – remain in Laos forty years after the end of the last Indochina war and continue to pose a threat to peoples' lives and livelihoods. Areas frequently visited by tourists have been cleared of UXO, but it is always a good idea to be careful when in rural areas or when trekking. Stay on streets or paths, and take a local guide if you do a trek or want to explore the forests. Do not pick up, kick or in any other way move metal or shiny items you see lying on a path or in the forest, and if you are suspicious that it might be a UXO, inform a local official, to help prevent accidents or deaths.

ABOUT FOOD AND ACCOMMODATION



Serving the famous sticky rice and selling fresh fish at the market

The highest concentration of restaurants and hotels can be found in Pakse, Champasak, Paksong, on the Four Thousand Islands and in Tad Lo. Cuisine options in Pakse include food from Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Korea, India, and Europe. Accommodation choices range from low-budget guesthouses to up-market resorts, although in the more remote areas choices are limited to guesthouses or homestays.

Food

Lao cuisine places a strong emphasis on seasonal and regional fresh vegetables and herbs. Southern Laos, thanks to its fertile soils on the Bolaven Plateau, offers a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and herbs such as chilli, coriander, galangal, ginger, basil, mint, dill and garlic, throughout the year. The Mekong, which in Lao means “the Mother of Waters”, delivers another important ingredient for most food specialities in Southern Laos the river fish.

“Laap Paa” and “Goi Paa”, are minced fish salads served with fresh vegetables on the side, and are typical for Southern Laos. You can also find grilled or steamed meat such as pork, chicken or buffalo on the menu. A dish is not complete, however, without the famous sticky rice (“Khao Niao”) served in a small bamboo basket. Due to its consistency, it is best eaten by hand and you can dip it into the sauce on your plate or you can ask for a “jeow”, a home-made tomato, aubergine or mushroom sauce. Soups are also common, and Bamboo Soup is a regional speciality.



Hospitality in Southern Laos

If you are vegetarian, ask whether you can have the dish with tofu ("to huu") or without meat ("baw sai seen"), or with vegetables ("phak").

Accommodation

Prices and quality of accommodation vary significantly. Hotels offer rooms costing anywhere between US\$20 and US\$200. Resorts and lodges in Laos are usually located in natural surroundings, near a waterfall or a river for example, and offer rooms or bungalows from US\$25 to US\$100. Guesthouses are usually smaller (less than 16 rooms) and cheaper with prices starting as low as US\$4 per night increasing to about US\$50.

From a cross-cultural perspective, the most interesting choice might be a family homestay. If you pick this option, facilities are likely to be basic and you will share them with your host family. This may not be everyone's preference, but those who opt for a homestay will gain a unique and genuine insight into the real lives of Lao families and will have a chance to experience the hospitality and kindness that Lao people are famous for. If you decide to go on a homestay, please see → Do's and Don'ts to learn about cultural norms that should be respected.

For further information visit www.southern-laos.com and the website of the Champasak Hotel & Restaurant Association www.champasak-hra.com





FESTIVALS AND EVENTS IN SOUTHERN LAOS

Festivals and ceremonies are a common and important part of Lao culture and life. Most celebrations are strongly linked to the Buddhist calendar and the rice farming cycle. Almost every month includes an event of some kind, and below you will find details about the bigger festivals that take place in Southern Laos. You are warmly welcome to participate, especially in lowland Buddhist ceremonies, but please respect the local codes of behaviour.

JANUARY/ FEBRUARY

Vat Phou Festival – Boun Vat Phou

The Vat Phou Festival takes place every year on the 15th day of the waning moon of the third month (depending on the lunar calendar this is usually during the end of January or the beginning of February). It is one of the largest festivals in the entire country. People gather at the base of the ancient UNESCO World Heritage Site, Vat Phou, to pray, take part in various ceremonies and to enjoy the three-day festivities.

Elephant Festival in Ban Kiet Ngong

The elephant festival takes place the day before the annual ceremony held at the Phou Asa mountain temple in the village of Kiet Ngong. The activities include traditional parades, dances, and a blessing ceremony honouring the elephants.

APRIL

Lao New Year – Pii Mai Lao

This is the biggest celebration of the year throughout the country and is a fun event to take part in. Lao New Year is celebrated for three days in mid-April. The festival is based on the importance of water in people's daily lives, and you will certainly get wet during this time. During Pii Mai, people splash water on one another to cleanse them of misfortune and bring luck for the coming year. In the Wat, Buddha images are cleansed with sacred water and many Lao people make special offerings at the temples. During Pii Mai Lao most businesses and government offices are closed.

MAY/JUNE**Rocket festival – Boun Bang Fai**

During this festival giant rockets, constructed from bamboo poles and stuffed with gunpowder, are launched into the sky to encourage the spirits to bring rain for the upcoming rice-growing season. The event is very exciting and loud bangs can be heard as the rockets explode. Traditionally, each village parades the rockets to the temple and makes offerings before shooting them towards the sky.

JULY**The start of Buddhist Lent – Boun Khao Pansa**

Held on the full moon, this festival marks the beginning of Buddhist Lent. This is a three-month period where monks are ordained and required to stay in their temples to meditate and focus on Dharma studies to make merit for themselves and their parents.

OCTOBER**The end of Buddhist Lent – Boun Ork Pansa**

Monks who were ordained during the three-months Lent period leave their temples to reunite with their families. In the evening of this full moon festival, small banana leaf boats with offerings of candles, incense, and small amounts of money are set afloat onto rivers to bring good luck and prosperity.

Boat racing festival – Boun Souang Heua

This festival is celebrated throughout the country and is an important event in the Southern Laos calendar as it is meant to pay homage to the Mekong River for helping to sustain the lives of people who live along its banks. Teams from different villages and districts compete with each other, in long boats with up to twenty paddlers. Pakse is typically the biggest and the first location in the province.

CULTURAL TIPS. DO'S AND DON'TS.

Greeting

The Lao word for Hello is “Sabai dee”, usually said with a smile. Lao people traditionally greet each other by pressing their palms together and bowing the head slightly, although it is acceptable for men to shake hands. Touching or showing affection in public is considered offensive. Please be discrete.

Dressing

Lao people appreciate neat and modestly dressed visitors. Be aware that nude sunbathing or swimming is considered impolite. For women it is recommended to keep a shirt on or to wear a sarong over one's swimming suit (check what the locals around you are doing). .

Temples

Please show respect while visiting temples. In temples or religious sites, both men and women should have covered shoulders and legs, while shoes and hats should be taken off. Women should not touch a monk or a monk's robes. It is also important that you do not touch sacred items or enter sacred sites without permission.

Homestay

Please remember to take your shoes off before you enter a Lao person's home. Sleep in the place your host has prepared for you and follow their directions. Lao people speak softly and avoid confrontation. Please do not shout or raise your voice. In Laos your head is 'High', your feet 'Low', and it is polite to gently crouch down when passing someone who is seated. Touching someone's head is viewed as impolite.

In the village

Please do not distribute gifts to children as it encourages begging, but give them to an established organization or village elders instead. Always ask permission before taking a photo of people and respect their wishes. Try to connect to people before taking pictures, as it can become an even more memorable moment.

- Please help keep Laos clean and beautiful by not leaving litter. Picking up rubbish sets a good example for Lao youth.
 - Please do not buy wildlife, antique Buddhas or other sacred items. Instead, support local craftsmen by purchasing new, quality handicrafts.
 - The use of drugs is illegal in Laos. The consequences may be severe for you and Lao society.
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LAO LANGUAGE KIT

In Southern Laos you will find younger people increasingly being able to speak English while some of the older generation will be able to speak French. It is, however, always fun to learn a few words in the local language. Good luck speaking with the locals!

English	Lao spoken	Lao written
Hello	Sabaidee	ສະບາຍດີ
Thank you (very much)	Khop jai (lai lai)	ຂອບໃຈຫຼາຍໆ
Excuse me/Sorry	Kho thot	ຂໍໂທດ
No problem	Baw pen yang	ບໍ່ເປັນຫຍັງ
Good-bye	La Khon	ລາກ່ອນ
Where is...?yoo sai?	ຢູ່ໃສ
Turn left/right	Liaw saai/khwaa	ລົງວຸ້ງຊ້າຍ/ຂວາ
Go straight ahead	Pai seu-seu	ໄປສື່ສື່
I want to go to...	Khoi yak pai...	ຂ້ອຍຢາກໄປ
Market	Ta lad	ຕະຫຼາດ
Temple	Wat	ວັດ
Hotel	Hong hem	ໂຮງແຮມ
Guesthouse	Baan phak	ບ້ານພັກ / ເຮືອນພັກ
Toilet	Hong nam	ຫ້ອງນ້ຳ
Bus station	Sathani lot mae	ສະຖານີລົດເມ / ຄົວລົດເມ
Airport	Sanambin	ສະໜາມບິນ
Hospital	Hong mo	ໂຮງໝໍ
Doctor	Than mo	ທ່ານໝໍ
Pharmacy	Haan kai yaa	ຮ້ານຂາຍຢາ
Restaurant	Haan ah haan	ຮ້ານອາຫານ

English	Lao spoken	Lao written
Eat	Kin Khao	ກິນເຂົ້າ
Rice (Sticky/Steamed)	Khao (niaw/jao)	ເຂົ້າ (ໝຽວ/ຈ້າວ)
Pork	Seen moo	ຊີ້ນໝູ
Beef	Seen ngua	ຊີ້ນງົວ
Chicken	Kai	ໄກ່
Fish	Bah	ປາ
Rice noodles	Foe	ເຝີ
Vegetables	Phak	ຜັກ
Fruit	Mak Mai	ໝາກໄມ້
Drink	Deum nam	ດື່ມ
Water	Nam	ນ້ຳ
Ice	Nam khon	ນ້ຳກ້ອນ
How much is it?	La kha Tho dai?	ລາຄາເທົ່າໄດ
Numbers	Lak yang	ເລກຫຍັງ
One	Neung	ໜຶ່ງ
Two	Song	ສອງ
Three	Saam	ສາມ
Four	Sii	ສີ່
Five	Haa	ຫ້າ
Six	Hok	ຫົກ
Seven	Jet	ເຈັດ
Eight	Paet	ແປດ
Nine	Kao	ເກົ້າ
Ten	Sip	ສິບ
Thousand	Phan	ພັນ
Ten	Sip	ສິບ
Thousand	Phan	ພັນ



Child Safe Tourism

Take action against abuse

Children working and living in tourist areas are especially vulnerable to physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Travellers have a part to play in creating a safer tourism environment for children - our small actions can make a big difference to help protect children from abuse and exploitation.

The choices you make can directly impact children's lives.

ACTION 1

If you see or suspect child abuse, report it immediately.

ACTION 2

Instead of giving money directly to children begging or selling food or souvenirs, support their families and communities or reputable children's charities.

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ACTION 3

Choose hotels and businesses that implement child protection standards.

ACTION 4

Please don't support 'orphanage tourism'. Visiting and volunteering with children in institutional care can be detrimental to their emotional and physical well-being. Instead support organisations and initiatives that enable children to be cared for within a family.

ACTION 5

Always ask permission before taking photos of children and never take them anywhere alone without supervision and permission. Respect their parents and guardians.

ACTION 6

Spread the word about Child Safe Tourism. Share this information with your friends and family while you travel and when you return home.

To learn more what you can do to help protect children, visit www.childsafetourism.org
For information on how businesses can do their part to protect children, visit www.thecode.org



Child Safe Tourism

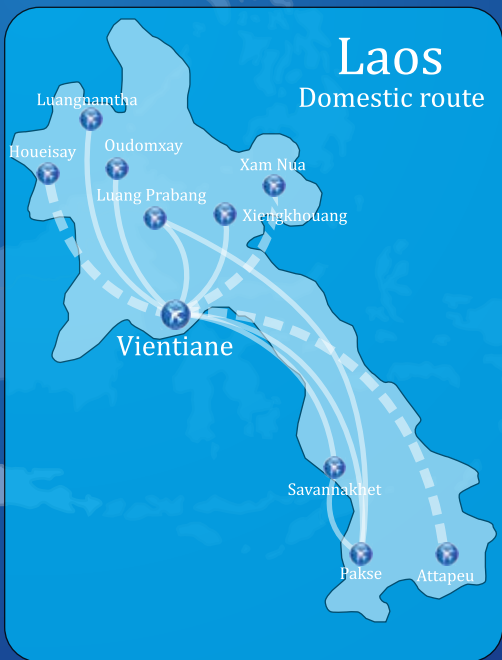


**We protect
children from
sex tourism.**

ການບິນລາວ Lao Airlines



www.laoairlines.com



Flights operate by

-  Lao Airlines
-  Future route
-  Code share flights

CONTRIBUTORS



Kingfisher Eco-lodge
www.kingfisherecolodge.com



Sinouk Coffee Resort
www.sinoukcoffeeresort.com

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Residence Sisouk
www.residence-sisouk.com



Pakse Hotel
www.hotelpakse.com



La Folie
www.lafolie-laos.com



Green Discovery
www.greendiscoverylaos.com

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

Champasak Tourist Information Office	Tel. +856 31 212 021, 252 667
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Salavan Tourist Information Office	Tel. +856 34 211 528
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Tourist Police, Pakse	Tel. +856 31 212 235, 252 127
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Hospital International Poly Clinic, Pakse	Tel. +856 31 214 712
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Ubonrak-Thonburi Hospital, Ubon Ratchathani (Thailand) www.ubonrak.co.th	Tel. +66 45 260 285, 260 300
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Fire	190
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Police	191
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Ambulance	195
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Southern Laos Tourism	www.southern-laos.com
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Ecotourism	www.ecotourismlaos.com
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Tourism Laos	www.tourismlaos.org
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Mekong Responsible Tourism	www.mekongresponsibletourism.org/laos
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CONTACTS

Champasak Tourist Information Office (ຫ້ອງການຂໍ້ມູນຂ່າວສານການທ່ອງທ່ຽວ)
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