

ແຂວງ ເຊກອງ SEKONG



Sekong Province is one of the least explored provinces in Laos due to its rugged landscape and mountainous terrain that rises to the Dak Cheung Plateau. Sekong is located in the heart of southern Laos, with Salavanh to the north, Champasak to the west, Attapeu in the south and Viet Nam to the east. Remnants of the Ho Chi Minh Trail originating in Ta Oy district in Salavanh Province pass through Sekong and the Dak Cheung Plateau on the way to southern Viet Nam. With 14 distinct ethnic groups belonging mainly to the Mon-Khmer linguistic family, this sparsely populated province is probably the most ethnically diverse in southern Laos. The Katu and Talieng are the largest ethnic groups in the province and are noted for their unique religious practices that mix animism and ancestor worship.

The Sekong River, which bisects the province flowing south into Cambodia is ideal for river trips. Local boatmen rent long-tail boats for scenic river journeys that follow the edge of the Bolaven Plateau south to Attapeu Province. Occasionally, freshwater dolphins migrate up the Sekong right up to Sekong Town. The province is dotted with many cascading waterfalls. Tad Hia, Tad Faek and Tad Se Noi (or Tad Hua Khon) waterfalls are the most convenient to visit from town and offer opportunities for swimming, trekking and village visits. Another waterfall not to be missed is the Nam Tok Katamtok, which originates from the Huay Katam River deep in the jungles of the Bolaven Plateau.



Backstrap Weaving

Xe Xap National Protected Area, which covers an area of 1,335 km² straddling Sekong and Salavanh provinces, includes part of the southern Annamite Mountains and is mostly steep terrain with high plateaus of about 1,400 m. On the eastern and southern sides of Xe Xap steep faces rise from 400 m to 1,400 m, topped by Dong Be at 2,066 m. The protected area's habitat of hill evergreen, semi-evergreen and pine forests support large mammal species including two types of bear, gaur, dhole, serow, large antlered muntjac and tigers.

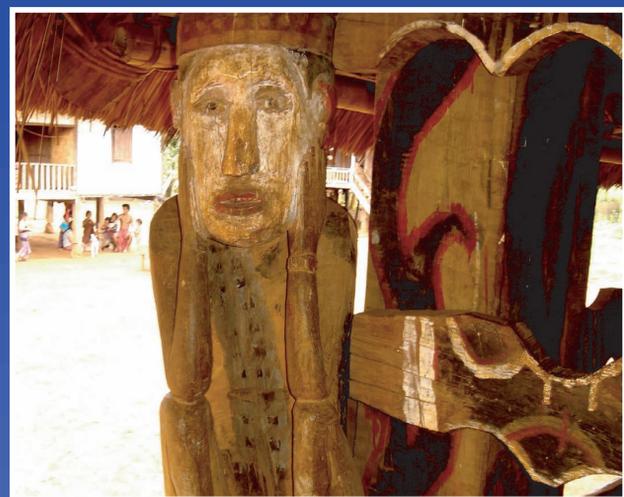
Sekong is well known for its unique textile patterns, which consist of multicolored line patterns created by using a backstrap loom. Although many of the groups produce beautiful weavings, the Nge ethnic group is



Kandone Village

especially renowned for its works, as well as the Alak for their traditional Lao skirts (*sin*). Handicrafts can be purchased directly from villages, as well as from handicraft shops in Sekong Town (also known as Muang Lamam). In Kandone Village there are excellent examples of woodcarvings and traditional longhouses.

If you are in Sekong during January - February inquire about the fascinating annual festivals held in Katu, Nge and Talieng villages. Another important local celebration is *Boun Souang Heua* (traditional boat racing), which takes place in Sekong on 2 December every year to coincide with Lao National Day.



Tad Sekong