

Lao National Flag



Laos Map



Table of Contents

General Information	P 04 - 11
Helpful Words to get you started	P 12
Dos and Don'ts	P 13 - 15
Nouthern Province	P 16
General Information of Phongsaly Province	P 19
Where to Visit	P 20 - 23
Attractions	P 24 - 27
Ethnic Diversity	P 28
Festivals in Phongsaly Province	P 29 - 30
Where to Stay	P 31
General Information of Luang Namtha Province	P 33
What to See / Do	P 34 - 49
Festivals in Luang Namtha Province	P 50 - 51
Where to Stay	P 53 - 57
General Information of Oudomxay Province	P 59
Where to Visit / Activities	P 60 - 75
Muang Pakbeng Town	P 76
Reasons to stay longer in Muang Pakbeng	P 77
Where to Stay	P 78 - 79
General Information of Bokeo Province	P 81
Historic Bokeo	P 82 - 85
The Mekong in Bokeo.....	P 86 - 89
Bokeo's Natural Attractions	P 90 - 93
Bokeo's Nam Kan NPA	P 94 - 97
Bokeo's Ethnic Communities	P 98 - 101
Ethnic Handicrafts	P 102 - 105
Farming Bokeo Forests	P 106 - 109
Festivals in Bokeo	P 110 - 113
Phou Pha Houng 1 day Mountain Trek	P 114 - 117
Where to Stay	P 119
General Information of Sayabouly Province	P 121 - 122
The Elephant Festival and Trade Fairs.....	P 123
Hand - Spun, hand Waven, Cotton Handicrafts.....	P 124 - 125
Ban Viengkeo... ..	P 127
Houay Namsai Medecianl Plant Preserve.....	P 128 - 130
Nam Thang Thousand Caves.....	P 131 - 137

Ban keo	P 138
Ban Thang	P 139
Map of Sayabouly Province	P 140 - 141
Where to Stay	P 142 - 143
General Information of Luang Prabang Province .	P 145
History LuangPrabang	P 146 - 147
Where to Visit	P 148 - 153
Festivals in Luang Namtha Province	P 154
Market	P 155 - 157
Handicraft Market	P 158
Event & Festivals.....	P 159 - 161
Map of Luang Prabang	P 162 - 163
Where to Stay	P 164 - 167
General Information of Xiengkhouang Province	P 169 - 170
Xiengkhouang History	P 171 - 172
Where to Visit	P 173 - 182
Local Product and Handicraft	P 183 - 187
Event & Festival	P 188 - 190
Where to Stay	P 191 - 193
General Information of Houaphanh Province	P 195
Where to Visit	P 196 - 199
Six Sites in Xam Neua	P 200 - 202
Nam Et NPA.....	P 203
Viengxay Brithplace of the Lao PDR	P 204 - 207
Viengxay Map	P 208 - 209
Where to Stay	P 210 - 215
National Protected Areas	P 211
Wildlife / Birds	P 212 - 215
Handicrafts	P 216
Lao Food	P 217
Lao PDR, Embassies and Consulates Abroad	P 218 - 221
Foreign Embassies and Consulates in Lao PDR	P 222 - 225
Useful Links and Telephone Numbers	P 226

General Information

Location and Geography

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao P.D.R), more commonly referred to as "Laos", is located at the center of the Indochinese Peninsula, stretching 1,700 km from north to south.

At its broadest point the country spans some 500 km east to west, while at its narrowest point located just south of Vientiane, there are only 140 km separating Thailand from Vietnam. Laos has a total land area of 236,800 square kilometers characterized by three distinct regions - North, Central and South of Laos.

The country's main geological features include low calciferous mountains, limestone karsts formations, the Xieng Khouang and Bolaven plateaus and the Mekong River Valley.

The mountains and plateaus make up three-quarters of the total land area. Lao P.D.R. shares a 505 km border with China to the border with Vietnam to the east, 1,835 km border with Thailand to the west, and a 236 km border with Myanmar to the northwest.

The highest peak is Phou Bia reaching just over 2,820 meter.

History

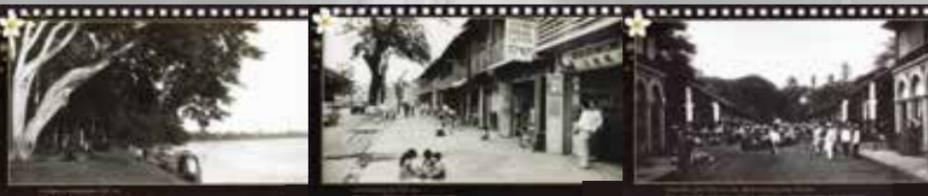
The first Lao kingdom, Lane Xang was founded in the 14th century by King Fa Ngum after he conquered and unified the lands north of Vientiane, including Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang and the Khorat Plateau stretching into what is today Nordeasten Thailand. Luang Prabang remained the capital of Lane Xang until King Phothisarath moved the Kingdom's administrative seat to Vientiane in 1545. Even after the capital moved to

Vientiane, Luang Prabang remained the country's spiritual and religious center. The country's first contact with western emissaries occurred in the mid 17th century during the reign of King Surigna Vongsa. After the death of Surigna Vongsa in 1694 Lane Xang broke up into three separate Kingdoms: Vientiane, Champasak and Luang Prabang.

Part of French Indochina during the 19th - early 20th century colonial period Laos achieved complete independence in 1975 with the founding of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Today Laos is comprised of 18 provinces. It is the least populated country in Southeast Asia, with nearly 6.7 million inhabitants in 2014 or about 26 people per km². In comparison, Vietnam has a population density of 230 people per km², and Thailand 120. Roughly 85% of the population lives in rural areas. Although few in absolute numbers, within the population of Laos there is tremendous ethnic diversity with 49 officially recognized ethnic groups speaking over 48 languages.

The largest contributor to the Gross Domestic Product is agriculture which provides a living for 80% of the population. The principal crop is sticky rice but corn, tobacco, cotton and coffee are also grown. Raising livestock for domestic and regional consumption is also an important economic activity. Harvest of non-timber forest products such as resins, herbal medicine and forest foods for commercial and home use is also a very important contributor to the Lao economy and rural people's livelihoods. The primary national industries include hydropower, garment manufacture, agro-forestry, tourism, mining and production of some common consumer goods.



Travel Information

Climate

Laos generally enjoys a mild tropical climate, but it can get quite chilly in the cool season. Temperatures range from 10 – 40 degrees Celsius in the Mekong Valley, and may dip below zero in the mountains and on the Xieng Khouang and Bolaven Plateaus. There are two distinct seasons - dry season from October - April, including cool from November - February and the rainy season which lasts from May - September.

Language

The national language is Lao, but English is commonly used in major tourist centers. Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai are widely understood. French, German, Russian and a number of other European languages are also spoken by many educated Lao as many students received university training in Europe during the 1970's-1990's.

Money

The official currency of the Lao PDR is the Kip. ATMs are available in major province. Major travelers checks can be cashed at banks. Credit cards are accepted in major hotels and a limited number of upscale shopping establishments and can be used to withdraw cash from ATMs.



Post and Internet Access

There are post offices in all provincial capitals where letters and parcels may be sent to your home country. At Vientiane's main post office there is a poste restante service. Both DHL and FedEx have offices in Vientiane. Internet access is available in all major tourist centers and towns except from the most remote population center.

Phone and Fax Services

International Direct Dial is widely available and you can send and receive faxes from all post offices and many private businesses. You can also purchase a local SIM card for your mobile phone. Mobile roaming is also available.

Electricity

24-hour electricity is available in all major population centers and many district capitals. Laos uses 220 volt AC.

Business Hours

Government offices are open from 8:30-12:00 and from 1:30 pm to 4:00pm on Monday through Friday. Private businesses are generally open later, especially restaurants and entertainment places.

Traveling with Children

Laos is a safe, quiet country with a lot to explore for both adults and children. Lao people love kids, and if you have yours along the attention and curiosity they arouse will open up many opportunities for you to interact and make friends.

Health

Laos has only basic healthcare. Precautionary measures like eating only well cooked food, drinking bottled water, staying hydrated, avoiding being bitten by mosquitoes and wearing protective clothing will help prevent most common ailments.

Transportation

Road

Getting around Laos is getting more and more convenient each year following major road and airport upgrades. There is daily bus service from Vientiane to all major provincial capitals and local buses and “songtaeow” available to more remote districts and villages with road access.

Air

Lao Airlines has flights to many domestic destinations and a number of regional capitals. The international airports in Vientiane, Pakse, Savannakhet and Luang Prabang have regular service to major cities in the region. From Wattay Airport in Vientiane you can reach Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Danang, Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, Kunming, Chengdu, Changzhou, Singapore. Direct flights are available to Luang Prabang from Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Hanoi and Seoul.

Boat

Another way to travel around Laos is on the Mekong River or one of its many tributaries. Luang Prabang is commonly access by riverboat from Houay Xay, and if you are heading north to Luang Namtha a two-day journey on the Namtha River is a memorable adventure that takes you through lush forest and requires an overnight stay in your boatmen’s home. There is regular boat service on the Mekong from Pakse to the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Vat Phou and throughout the Four Thousand Islands in the far south.

Train

A train operates daily between Thanaleng Station near the Lao Thai Friendship Bridge (Vientiane Capital) and Nongkhai (Thailand) connecting Laos to Thailand.

Entering Laos

PASSPORT/VISA

All visitors entering Laos must possess valid passports and visitors from non-ASEAN Countries require a Visa. Visa can be obtained for 30 days from Lao Embassies and Consulates abroad. In addition, visa can also be obtained on arrival at international border checkpoints. The visa fee varies from between US\$20- 45 depending on the agreement with the various governments. It is possible to extend the visa at the Immigration Office in Vientiane and through travel agencies.

ENTRY POINTS

International Airports:

- Wattay International Airport in Vientiane Capital
- Luang Prabang International Airport in Luang Prabang Province
- Pakse International Airport in Champasak Province
- Savannakhet International Airport in Savannakhet province
- Attapeu Province International Airport



International Border Checkpoints

- Phongsaly Province (Pang Hok) - Vietnam (Taichang Laichau) (No Visa on arrival)
- Phongsaly Province (Lan Tuy) - China (Muong Kham)
- Luang Namtha Province (Boten) - China (Mohan)
- Bokeo Province (Friendship Bridge IV) - Thailand (Chiang Khong)
- Bokeo Province (Ban Meuang Mom) - Myanmar (Vang Pong)
- Bokeo Province (Golden Triangles) - Thailand (Golden Triangles)
- Xiengkou Riverport on Mekong River in Luang Namtha Province
- Sayabouly Province (Khaenthao) - Thailand (Nakaxeng - Loei)
- Sayabouly Province (Phakeo) - Thailand (Phoudou)
- Sayabouly Province (Nam Ngeun) - Thailand (Houay Konl, Nan)
- Luang Prabang Province International Airport
- Xieng Khouang (Nonghaet) - Vietnam (Namkanh)
- Houaphanh Province (Nam Souy) - Vietnam (Na meo)

Suggested Routes

Typical (1-2 Weeks)

Houay Xay - Lunag Namtha - Oudomxay -

Luang Prabang - Vientiane.

Sayabouly - Luang Prabang - Xienkhouang - Vientiane
or

Vietnam.

Off - The - Beaten Track (2-3 Weeks)

Houay Xay - Luang Namtha - Oudomxay - Phongsaly
- Luang Prabang - Houaphanh - Xieng Khouang -
Vientiane or Vietnam.

Sayabouly - Oudomxay - Luang Prabang -
Xiengkhouang - Houaphanh - Vietnam or Vientiane.

North to South (4 Weeks)

Houay Xay - Luang Namtha - Oudomxay - Luang
Prabang - Houaphanh - Xieng Khouang - Vientiane -
Khammouane - Champasak.

- Houay Xai - Luang Namtha - Oudomxay - Sayabouly
- Luang Prabang - Xiengkhouang - Vientiane -
Khammouan - Champasak.

ສະບາຍດີ / Sa Bai Dee
Welcome to Lao PDR



Basic Vocabulary
Helpful words to get you started:

Hello	: Sabaidee	Hospital	: Hong mo
Thank you	: Khop Chai	Hotel	: Hong hem
Please	: Kaloona	Toilet	: Hong nam
Good-bye	: La Khon	Post office	: Paisanee
No problem	: Bo pen yang	Zero	: Soun
Eat	: Kin khao	one	: Neung
Water	: Nam	Two	: Song
Ice	: Nam Kon	Three	: Sam
Drink	: Deum nam	Four	: See
Yes	: Chao	Five	: Ha
No	: Bo	Six	: Hok
Rice	: Khao	Seven	: Chet
Where?	: Yoo sai?	Eight	: Paet
How much?	: Thao dai?	Nine	: Kao
Expensive	: Pheng	Ten	: Sip
Bus	: Lot mae	One hundred	: Neung Hoi
Doctor	: Than mo	One thousand	: Neung phan
Departmentstore	: Han sapha sin kha	Tourist Police	: Tam luon thong thieu
Market	: Ta lad	Airport	: Sanambin
		Bus station	: Sathani lot mae

Dos and Don'ts

For culturally sensitive travel in Lao PDR

Using your eyes and common sense will help guide you - while in Laos, try and do as the Lao do, and you will be rewarded with hospitality and friendliness.

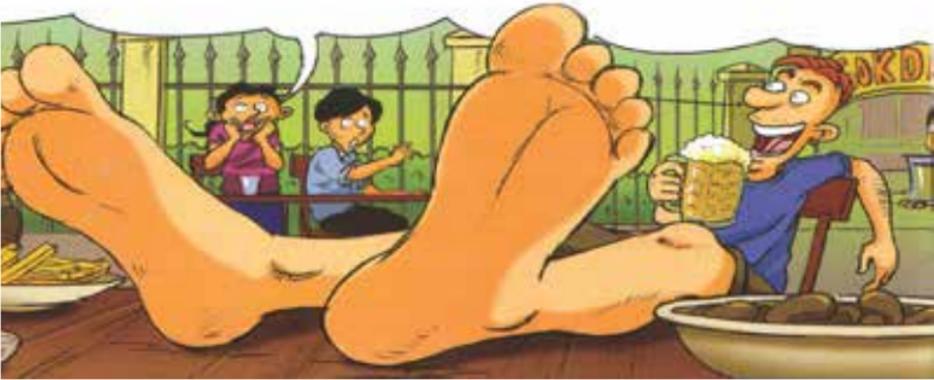
Wearing revealing clothing and showing your flesh (for women and men) is offensive to Lao. Whilst you may see some tourists wearing bikinis, crop tops, high shorts or taking their shirts off in public if does not mean that the Lao find it acceptable. Clean clothes are also appreciated.



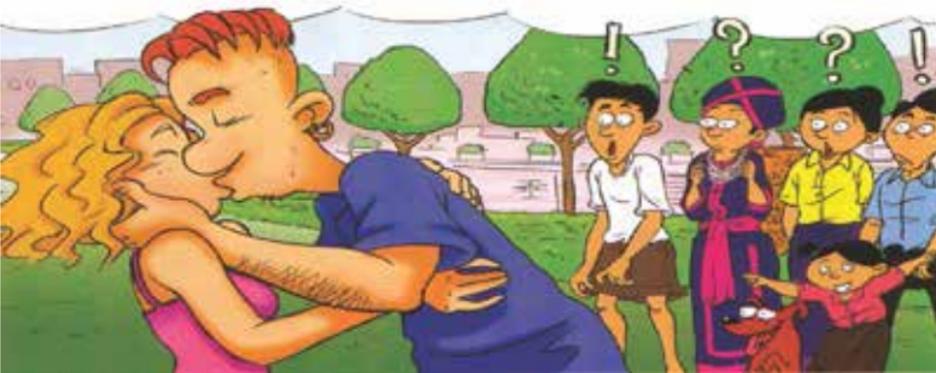
Monks are revered and respected in Laos, However women should not Touch a monk or a monk 's robes.



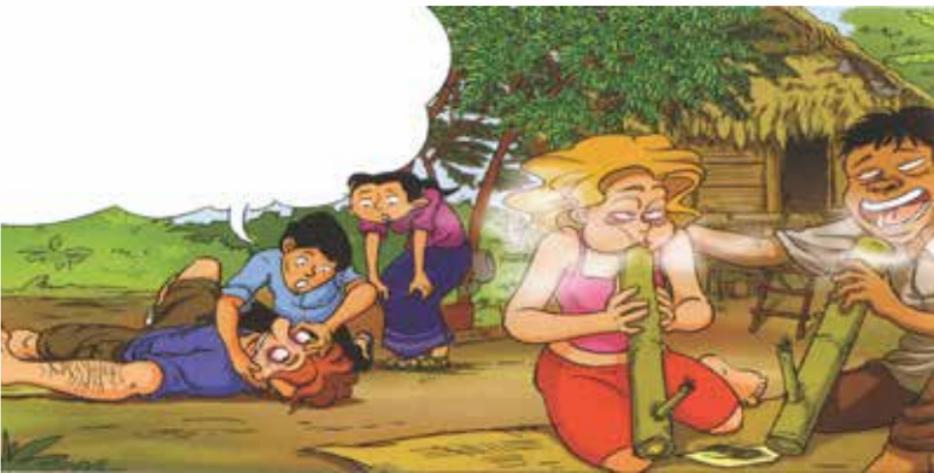
In Laos, your head is "high" and your feet is "low" don't gesture with your feet or put your feet on the furniture. Also don't touch someone else's head.



Kissing and hugging in public is impolite - Please be discrete.



The use of drugs is illegal in Laos. The consequences may be severe for you and Lao society.



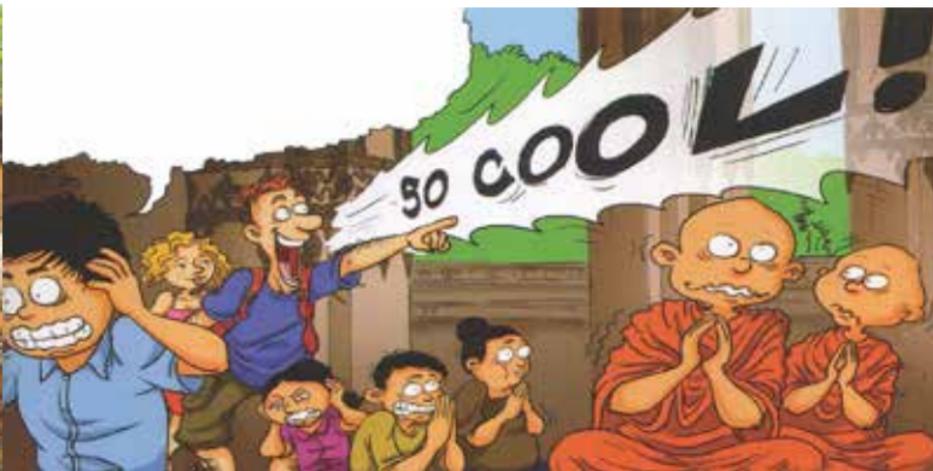
Try eating Delicious Lao food whenever you can.
It help local business and Lao farmers.



Before taking a photo of someone, please
ask if he/she is ok.



Lao people speak softly and avoid confrontation.
Please don't shout or raise your voice.



NORTHERN PROVINCE

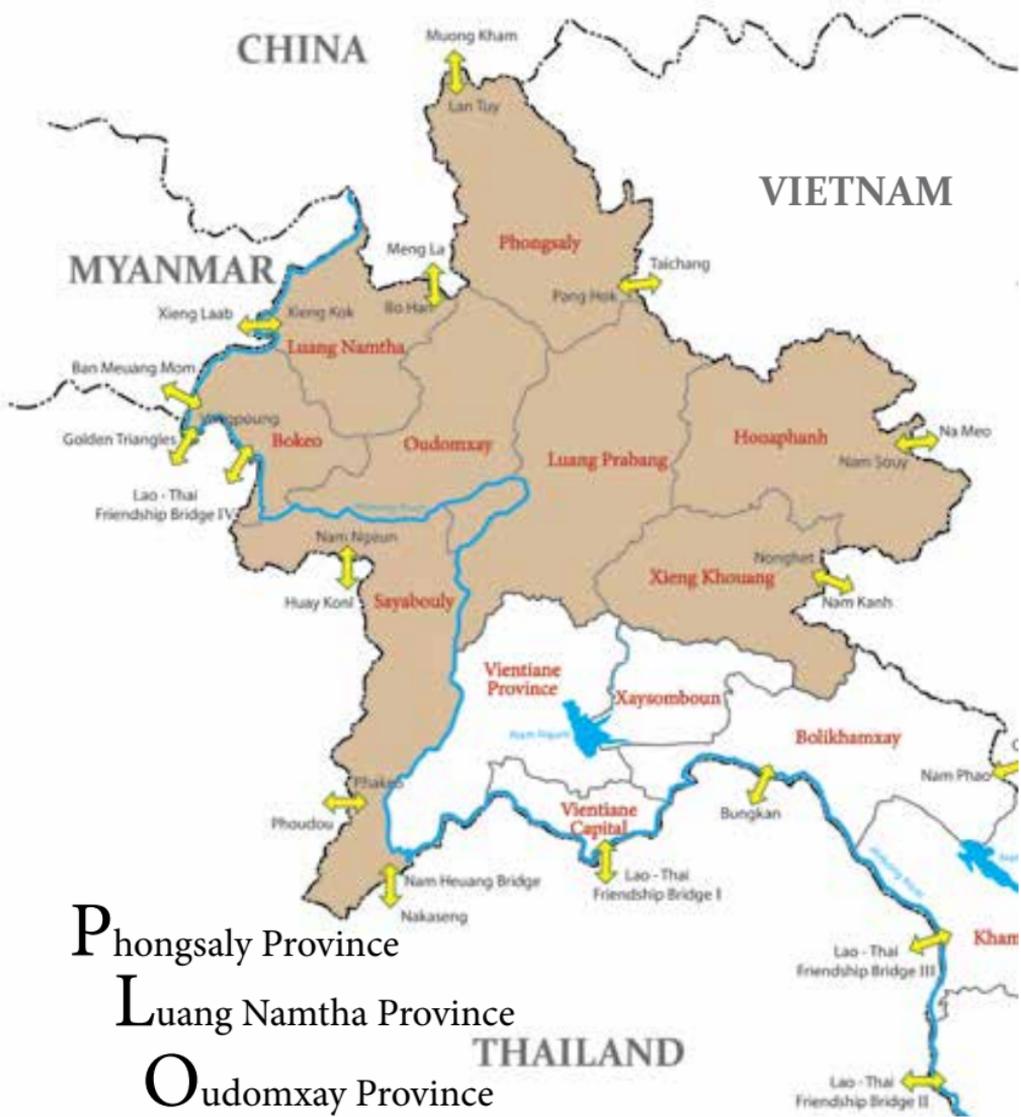
Travel Through a Sea of Clouds and Ethnic Diversity in the Mountains of Northern Laos and the Northern Heritage route

The northern part of Laos is known for its rugged Mountains and diverse ethnic cultures.

It is a mountainous region shaped karst mountain, plateaus, meandering rivers and biologically rich forests.

Dominated by mountains that rise to over 2,000 m, this part is the country's most popular trekking area and offers a range of trails through green jungle to remote ethnic minority villages.

The northern part of famous for its historical towns centers and important historical sites such as LuangPrabang, UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Phongsaly Province

Luang Namtha Province

Oudomxay Province

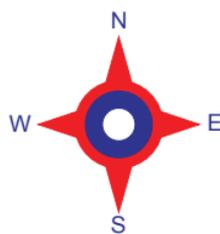
Boko Province

Sayabouly Province

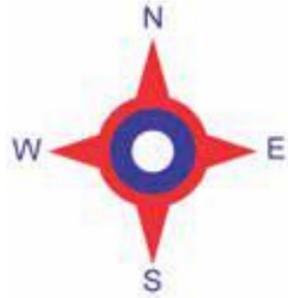
Luang Prabang Province

Xieng Khouang Province

Houaphanh Province



Nouthern Paradise



Legend

Road

Route Indicator

Capital of Province

District



International Border Crossing



International Border



Provincial Border



Information Center



National Protected Area (NPA)

Phongsaly Province

- Location:** Northern part of Laos
Total area: 16,270 square kilometers
Population: 176,151 (2010).
Districts: Phongsaly, May, Khua, Samphan, Boun-Neua, Boun-Tay and Gnot-Ou
Capital: Phongsaly

Phongsaly Province is one of the remotest of the Lao PDR Provinces, and is dominated by rugged, mountainous terrain and an abundance of thick forests and fast-flowing rivers. It is inhabited by 25 different ethnic groups, each with their own culture, traditions, costumes, and languages. Most of the land is between 500 and 1,500 metres elevation, which moderates the heat of the surrounding areas of Southeast Asia and makes the climate more suitable for trekking and other physical activities. The forests contain an abundance of animal, bird, insect and plant life, and there are certainly many undiscovered species, new to science.

Ethnic groups in Phongsaly include Khmu, Tai Dam, Thai Daeng, Yao, Lue, Hor, Hmong, Akha, Yang, Bid, Lolo and others. Each ethnic group has own identity, language and culture such as wedding ceremonies, handicrafts, silver wares and jewelry.

Boun Neua and Boun Tay are thriving little market towns, and now do a lot of trade with nearby Yunnan Province, China. Mouang Khoa is a small river port on the picturesque Nam Ou River. Phongsaly town is more like a hill station with cooler climate and is a centre for trekking to the surrounding areas. All of these small towns have guesthouses and small hotels which welcome both international and local visitors.

Phongsaly is in the process of building a new provincial capital in Boun-Neua District.



Phongsaly Town



Nestling under the thickly forested Phoufa Hill, Phongsaly at 1,400 metres elevation has developed around an old market centre with cobbled streets and picturesque wooden buildings, including a very old Chinese quarter. Climb the jeep track up the Phoufa Hill (1,650 metres) and enjoy a spectacular view over the town and the surrounding mountainous terrain. The high ridge line which forms the horizon to the west is a Jurassic escarpment—the geology of the Province is a full cross-section of the age of the dinosaurs. Look for plant fossil (and dinosaurs!) just below the summit of the Phoufa.





Old Town



Unless many other cities in Laos, Phongsaly town has not been destroyed by bombing during in the American war. It features a remaining old quarter with Yunnanese wooden architecture now rare to find in Yunnan itself. Most of the people living here belong to the Hor ethnic group, speaking Chinese. Until the 1970s there has been a Chinese consulate in Phongsaly town, now the 'Phu Fa Hotel'.

Phongsaly is good base for trekking

It is fantastic to trek along the ridge lines to the North-east and Southeast, or more vigorous treks along the Jurassic escarpment (about 30 km to the west of Phongsaly on the Boun Neua road), or along the foot of the escarpment (km 37, take off to the south through forest and paddy fields on the new Nam Boun Kao trail).



Phongsaly Tourism Office offers 1 to 4-day eco-trekking tours to remote ethnic diverse villages. All of them follow community-based ecotourism principles. You can start from Phongsaly, Boun Neua and Boun Tai. For the full trekking program and prices you can visit the tourism office. or to book a trek at

Mr. Khamphanh Mobile +856 (0) 20 5428 4600 or 856(0) 20 2844 9939, Tel/Fax: +856 (088 210 098



The Akha Ethnic Group

The Akha originated in the Tibetan plateau and gradually migrated south through Yunnan, China and Myanmar in the mid-19th century, settling throughout the mountainous regions in north-western Laos. Visitors can meet the Akha people in Phongsaly and Luang Namtha Provinces at altitudes above 1,000 metres, where they live a subsistence life on mountain rice and forest food. In spite of the numerous waterways in the area, the animist Akha fear water, which they view as a powerful spirit. As such, they never settle near rivers.

The Akhazan (Akha Way) code, a complex system of behaviour and beliefs, governs their lives. The Akha have orally passed their traditions down through the generations in their own language as they have no written alphabet. The Akha Way shows strong respect for people and natural resources, which they believe are guided by the spirits of their ancestors.

The Akha are known for their weaving skills and produce elaborate decorative textiles. Akha women wear distinctive black or indigo clothing and head-dresses with ornamental coins and shells.

Most villages will have untouchable gates, which mark the boundary between the human and natural worlds. An Akha visit highlight is the annual swing ceremony held between mid-August and September.



Attractions

Phongsaly Town

400-year-old Tea Trees

Tea Pavilion and 400-year-old tea trees

The famous 400-year-old tea plantation is located about 18 kilometers from Phongsaly Town in the Phunoy village of Ban Komaen, which according to some tea experts has some of the oldest tea trees in the world. The large root system of the old trees extends deep into the mineral-rich soil and gives 'Phongsaly Tea' its specific aroma and taste.

The oldest trees stand 6 m high with a stem up to 30 cm in diameter.

The Tea Pavilion's exhibition provides a peek into the world of tea, from its legendary beginnings to its production and consumption, and explains how the famous 400-year-old tea is picked and processed by the villagers into "tea cigars". From there, you can take a 1 hour stroll through the ancient plantation: just follow the Tea Trail signs! The trail will lead you to the top of the tea mountain to enjoy the stunning view of Phongsaly and then to the village temple and its unique big-eared Buddha statue.

Ban Komaen makes an ideal 1-day excursion, the relatively flat road passing through more recent tea plantations and offering a superb view of Phongsaly and surrounding mountains.

Town map and mountain bikes to rent (50,000 kip/day) are available at the Tourism Office. A tuktuk can also be organized for you (250,000 to 300,000 kip, dry season only). Motorcycles can be rented at Amazing Lao Travel. Visitors are asked to make a 5,000 kip contribution to the village fund.



Phongsaly Town

Green Whiskey Producing Village

From Phongsaly Town, if you feel like going for a walk, take the flat road starting under the Phu Fa Hotel. The view of endless mountains is breathtaking and especially beautiful at sunset. It will lead you to Kounsouk Noy (4,5 km), a Phunoy village producing Phongsaly's most renowned green whiskey (*lao kiaw*). If you are lucky, you will meet villagers distilling the rice alcohol and even have the chance to try a shot! If you go further, you will reach another Phunoy village, Kounsouk Louang, after another 3km.



Phongsaly Town

Ethnic Museum

The Museum of Phongsaly Ethnic Groups' newly-designed exhibition has been inaugurated in January 2013. It presents the province and its people, their origin and way of life. It also includes information and exhibits about different aspects of their daily life: clothes, music, agriculture, housing, social organization, their rituals and ceremonies, as well as about Buddhism. Don't miss it, it is one of the best museums in Laos and you will not find this information anywhere else! You will need at least 1 hour to visit the exhibition.

The museum is located in the centre of Phongsaly town, next to the Agriculture Promotion Bank and Lao Telecom, close to the post office. It opens Monday to Friday from 8:00 to 11:30 and 13:30 to 16:30. Entry fee: 10,000 kip (5000 kip for Lao people). For more information please contact Mr. Khoun: 020 56576050





Ethnic Diversity

Phongsaly is well-known for its colorfully dressed minorities. The population is officially made up of 28 different ethnic groups, but if we were to count them in the way the people identify themselves there would be more than 40. Many of them came from elsewhere, mostly from China, fleeing wars and famine during the 19th Century. In Phongsaly Town, the two main ethnic groups are the Phunoy, and the Hor, descendants of the old Yunnan traders. Thai Dam people are mostly found in Muang Mai District, Yao, Hor and Lolo people in Gnot Ou district. Many Khmu live in Muang Khua and Samphan districts. They are at least 14 different groups of Akha and related people. Most of their villages are remote up in the mountains, some of them constituting a perfect trekking destination. Akha people practice spirit worship and several taboos are to be respected in their villages. The Museum of Phongsaly Ethnic Groups provides detailed information about the different ethnic groups, their origin and way of life.





Festivals in Phongsaly Province

Thanks to its ethnic diversity, Phongsaly has a large number of festivals. Most ethnic groups celebrating their New Year, for example, at a different time of the year. But most celebrations don't have fixed schedules and depend on the moon or the harvest time. The date can also be chosen by the spirits themselves



The Lao New Year (Pi Mai Lao) is celebrated by Lao and Phunoy people mid-April (during the full moon). It is also known as the “water festival”... so be prepared to get wet! It actually allows you to let all the bad things from past year behind you and give you good luck to enter the new year. Apart from going to the temples and making offerings to their ancestors, people gather for the rocket festival, where different villages compete for the highest traveling (often self-made) rocket. And many go up the hill for the Phu Fa Stupa Ceremony to make offerings to the Buddha and the spirits of the forest.



The Khmu people celebrate their New Year (Boun Greu) in January, each village at a different date. In Phongsaly town, festivities are organized every three years only (next time should normally be in 2015).

For the Hor New Year (Kin Jieng), Phongsaly town resonates with the sound of firecrackers. This is also the only time the Hor temple opens during the year. In the villages, Tai Yang and Tai Deng people celebrate their own New Year simultaneously (February, same date as the Chinese New Year).

A Boat Racing Festival (Boun Souang Heua) is organized every year in Muang Khua for the end of Buddhist lent (full moon day in October).





Where to stay in Phongsaly

Hongthong Hotel

Phonthong Village, Boun Tay District
Mobile: +856-20 22398753

Omphon Hotel

Phongsaly Village, Phongsaly District
Tel: +856-88 210922

Phongsaly Hotel

Phongsaly Village, Phongsaly District
Tel: +856-88 210042

Phoufa Hotel

Phoufa Village, Phongsaly District
Tel: +856-88 210031

Sourenalay Hotel

Meuangkhua Village, Meuangkhua District
Tel: +856-88 210811

Viphaphane Hotel

Sansally Village, Phongsaly District
Tel: +856-88 210999

Akhay GuestHouse

Phouxiang Village, Gnot Ou District
Mobile: +856-20 56881925

Bounmychaleunsouk GuestHouse

Phoxaitay Village, Meuangkhua District
Tel: +856-88 210847

Chanmaly GuestHouse

Namly Village, Samphanh District
Mobile: +856-20 6415634

Chunsaimay GuestHouse

Naxay Village, Samphanh District
Tel: +856-88 692842

Daosavanh GuestHouse

Salongxay Village, khua District
Mobile: +856-20 56664599

Haoxaiyalat GuestHouse

Bounneua Village, Boun Neua District
Tel: +856-88 210785

Hongthong GuestHouse

Phonthong Village, Boun Tay District
Tel: +856-88 210863

Inthaseng GuestHouse

Bounneua Village, Boun Neua District
Mobile: +856-20 55100648

Khaemnamlan GuestHouse

Phonthong Village, Boun Tay District.
Tel: +856-88 210873

Khaemou GuestHouse

Meuangkhua Village, khua District.
Tel: +856-88 210844

Keophila GuestHouse

Phoxaitay Village, Meuangkhua District.
Tel: +856-210807

Khamsengvong GuestHouse

Namly Village, Samphanh District
Mobile: +856-20 54059933

Lao China GuestHouse

Bounfeuang Village, Boun Neua District
Mobile: +856-20 23900006

Mhunchai GuestHouse

Phoxaitay Village, khua District
Tel: +856-88 210841

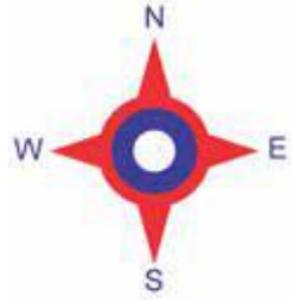
Saengkhammanyvong Guesthouse

Tai Village, yordou District
Tel: +856-88 210899

Manokham GuestHouse

Natoum Village, khua District
Tel: +856-88 210950





Legend



Road



Route Indicator



Capital of Province



District



International Border Crossing



International Border



Provincial Border



Information Center



National Protected Area (NPA)

Luang Namtha Province

- Location:** Northwestern Laos
Total area: 9,325 square kilometers
Population: 164,310 (2010)
Districts: Namtha, Muang Sing, Muang Long, ViengPhou Kha and Nale
Capital: Namtha

Luang Namtha province is located in the upper north-west of Laos, bordered by Myanmar in the northwest, China to the North, Oudomxay Province to the south-east, and Bokeo Province to the southwest. 39 ethnic groups make up the population of 140,000. in Luang Namtha. Each group having its own dialect, culture and lifestyle, but coexisting peacefully - a reflection of traditional solidarity. Most people in Luang Namtha live in small rural villages and practice agriculture as their main occupation.

Covering nearly 30% of the province's land area is the Nam Ha National Protected Area well known for a range of ecotourism activities. Due to its mountainous terrain the weather here can get quite cool, with temperatures generally not topping 30°C in the hot season (March-April) and dropping to as low as 0°C (December-January). During May-October, the southwestern monsoon brings the annual rains and marks the beginning of the new agricultural cycle.



Travel information

Getting around Luang Namtha

Luang Namtha is accessible by air, land and river. The most popular overland routes to and from the province start and end at Bokeo Province's Ban Houey Xay and Luang Prabang. There is an international border crossing at Boten (China-Laos) and regular air service from Vientiane on Lao Airlines. For adventuresome travelers, try a journey up the Mekong River from Ban Houay Xay to Xieng Kok in Muang Long, or a 2-day river journey up the Namtha River, which also originates in Ban Houy Xay. Once you reach the province, local transport by *tuk tuk*, the bus or a *song taeow* is inexpensive and easy to arrange. For short trips, many people get around by renting bicycles.

What to See / Do

→ Luang Namtha

→ Muang Sing

→ Vieng Phoukha

→ Nalae Town



Luang Namtha

Natural Attractions

Nam Dee Waterfall

About 6 km northeast of the town centre, the Lao Huay (Lenten) village of Ban Nam Dee (Good Water) is a good place to observe the process of bamboo papermaking. Behind the village you will see the entrance to the Nam Dee Waterfall. The area around the waterfall offers good facilities, like a small handicraft shop managed by the villagers; toilets and a Pavilion for picnics, etc.





The Nam Ha National Protected Area

The Nam Ha NPA's landscape is very diverse, characterized by an ever changing mosaic of swidden fields and regenerating forests. Very old forest remains in a few remote areas due to inaccessibility. It is estimated that about 32% of the NPA is undisturbed or primary forest. Within the NPA boundaries two peaks top 2,000 meters and dozens of rivers and streams crisscross the NPA's rugged landscape.

More than 30 mammals inhabit Nam Ha NPA including rare tigers, leopards and gaurs (a large, wild cow) although large mammals are very hard to see. There are also some 300 bird species, such as silver pheasants, blue and eared pitas, and a variety of bulbuls.



Luang Namtha Cultural Attractions

Night Market



The newly renovated night market is located in the centre of Luang Namtha town, where local villagers from many different ethnic minorities offer their unique handi-crafts for sale. The night market opens every evening and is a good place for eating typical Lao dishes or, occasionally, for watching dance or music performances.





The Handicraft Village

Ban Phieng Ngam and the Distillery Village Ban Nam Ngaen

The handicraft village Ban Phieng Ngam and the distillery village Ban Nam Ngaen have two ethnic groups, the Tai Deang and the Tai Kao. The villages are famous for their many different handicrafts. A small lodge built by the Nam Ha Ecotourism Project, offers accommodation for anybody who is interested to experience the rural Lao lifestyle. Not far, within walking distance from Ban Phieng Ngam is the Lao Lao distillery village Ban Nam Ngaen, where people can see the process of making the famous Lao rice whiskey. You can go by bicycle following the map in this guide book.





Ban Nam Dee (Lanten Village)

Ban Nam Dee is located around 6 km far from Luang Namtha. These Lao Huay (Lanten) still keep their traditional culture and way of life a good place to observe the process of bamboo papermaking. Behind the village you will see the entrance to the Nam Dee Waterfall. The village organizes home stay. Stay 1 or 2 nights to experience the Lanten culture and tradition, taste local meals, learn how to make paper from bamboo and participate in the daily work of your host family depending on the season.



Luang Namtha Heritage Sites



That Phoum Pouk (Phoum Pouk Stupa)

The stupa is located near Nam Ngaen village on a hill in the northeast part of the Namtha Valley. The original stupa was constructed in 1628 to demarcate neutral territory between the Kingdoms of Lane Xang (centered in Luang Prabang) and Lan Na (centered in Chiang Mai). In 1966 the old stupa was destroyed when an American plane dropped a bomb on it. The new monument seen besides the older, ruined stupa was constructed in 2003.





Luang Namtha Stupa

A long time ago Sy Sod So Tam-mikarad. King of Xieng Sean (in Present-day northern Thailand) and Naleatafai, King of Chantabouly (Present-day Oudomxay), built two stupas to symbolize their friendship. One stupa was That Phoum Pouk, the second stupa, located on the eastern head of the Namtha River, was lost to the forest, but rebuilt in December 2004. Now called the Luang Namtha Stupa, it's easy to access from the northern of town.



Muang Sing

Natural Attractions

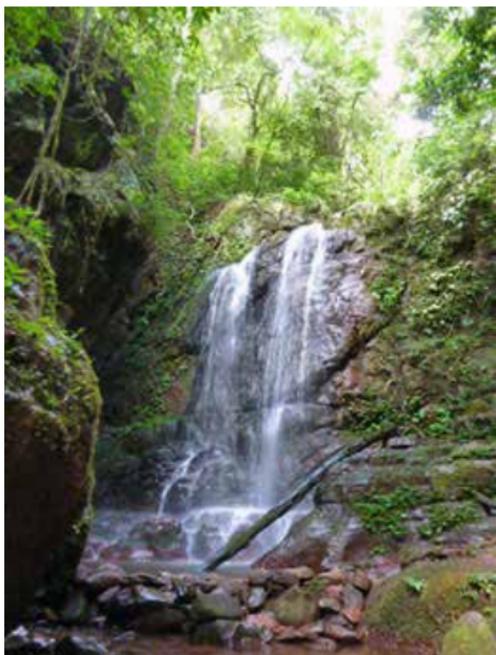
Nam Keo Waterfall

Nature lovers will enjoy this place. The multi-tiered Nam Keo Waterfall is located about 2 kilometers from the That Xieng Tung stupa and can be visited as part of a guided tour from the Muang Sing Ecoguide Service or while on the Akha Experience.



Pha Yueng Waterfall

Pha Yueng Waterfall is a good place for a refreshing dip. It is located in Nam Ha National Protected Area, 17 km south of Muang Sing on the road to Luang Namtha. Follow the trail along the river for about 20 minutes to reach the waterfall.





Muang Sing

Cultural Attractions

Muang Sing Museum



The Muang Sing Museum situated close to the center of town, is a good place to start exploring Muang Sing's rich culture and history. The old wood and brick building was once the residence of Phanya Sekong, a local lord called Jao Fa Noi or

Little Prince, who ruled over the area in the early 20th century. The building was restored in 2005. The façade were repaired and refinished, but the clay roofing tiles that covered the residence of Phaya Sekong before were converted to a mix of corrugated iron and asbestos tiles painted red.

Ethnic Villages

Take a guided tour by one of the local operators or hop on a bicycle for a full-day exploring Muang Sing's town environs. On a tour you will visit 8-10 villages and learn about the rural life of different ethnic groups. The Chinese border is only 10 km from town and makes for a refreshing journey on a bicycle. You can't cross the border, however the scenery along the way is beautiful and worth the ride



Muang Sing

Heritage Sites



That Xieng Teung

That Xieng Tung (Xieng Teung Stupa) is the most important stupa in Muang Sing. It is said to contain the Adam's apple of Buddha. The construction date is unknown. To the left of the stupa are some steps which lead to a sacred fountain and a sacred stone. If you follow a path to the right of the stupa (be careful!) downhill you might be able to find the old moat and wall of the stupa. The biggest festival of the year, That Xieng Teung Festival, is held here during the fullmoon of the 12th lunar month (usually in late October or early November) and attracts a wide gathering from villages and people around the district and Luang Namtha province. The stupa is located 5.5 km from the center of town, on the road towards Luang Namtha, situated on the top of a hill. There is a large dirt road leading up to it on your right as you're coming from Muang Sing.





Vieng Phoukha

Natural Attractions

Kao Rao Cave Ban Nam Eng

Vieng Phoukha town is surrounded by limestone karsts formations that have many interesting and beautiful caves. Formed by centuries of weathering that has gradually carved huge caverns out of the porous limestone, Vieng Phoukha's caves have some of the most beautiful underground formations in northern Laos. During prehistoric times many of the caves might have



been inhabited by people, but today they primarily support nesting swifts and thousands of roosting bats of over a dozen species. Some of the most accessible are the caves near Nam Eng Village (Tham Kao Rao) and the network of caverns at the base of the Phou Prasat limestone formation near Tha Louang Village.



Ban Nam Eng offers home stay, and the area in front of Kao Rao Cave is ideal for a picnic.

Sacred Bor Kung and Bor Kang

Directly behind the tourism office is the sacred forest that protects Bor Kung, the shrimp spring. The area is renowned for its clear waters and abundant fish, crabs and of course shrimp. Another nearby spring is Stew-



pot Spring or Bor Kang. Like a stewpot it is always brimming with water. Bor Kang is the source of the Sai stream which remains clear and cool during all seasons, flowing into the nearby Nam Jook River. Pools fed with water from Bor Kung are available for a refreshing bath.

Vieng Phoukha

Natural Attractions

Ancient Kilns and Bronze Drum (*Kong bang*)

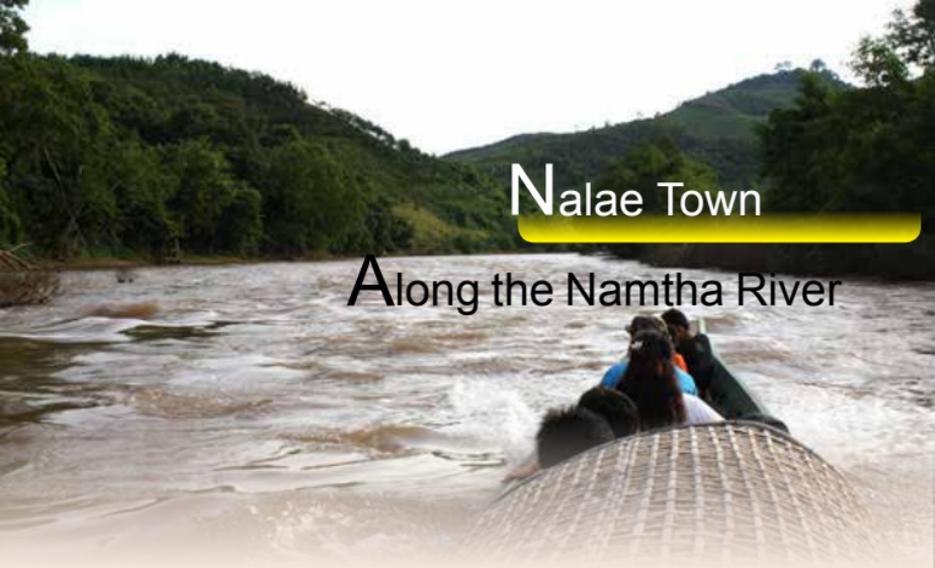
Southwest of Vat Mahaphot are a number of earthen mounds that were once kilns, believed to have been used to manufacture bronze drums known as *kong bang* in Lao. These drums, a symbol of status and wealth, can be seen



in the Luang Namtha Provincial Museum. There are also a number of privately owned drums remaining in Vieng Phoukha

Nalae Town

Along the Namtha River



River Trip on the Nam Tha

The Nam Tha is a main provincial transportation artery linking Luang Namtha to Nalae and further on to the Mekong. At a length of 325 km it is gently meandering through the Namtha valley, broken further south by rapids as it flows through mountainous terrain towards the Mekong.

The river is a traditional trading route and source of communication to other villages and provinces. Khmu-Rok, Khmu-Yuan, Khmu-Kwaen and Tai Lue communities settled along the river banks and their life still relies on the river. Fish is a staple food and major source of income.

The residents of the villages are well-known as skillful weavers and handicraft makers. Traditional clothing, cotton textiles, basketry, agricultural tools and many products used in everyday life are made in people's homes and they all reflect their continued reliance on the forest.

Riding along the beautiful Nam Tha River by kayak or raft is quit an adventure. Longer tours take you by wooden

long-tail boat up and downstream to villages perched by the river. Here you can learn from local people how to weave, catch fish, make fish traps and prepare local dishes. The beauty of the river and the friendliness of the people create unforgettable river life experiences.

There are many options for visitors ranging from day trips to villages to multi-day river life adventures. Local boat hire is available, but not yet a regular service between Namtha, Nalae and Houay xay. Tours can be arranged through local tour operators and include local guides, food prepared by local villagers, and overnight stays in villages along the way where visitors get a unique insight into Nalae people's traditional lives. The activities benefit the local economy and contribute to protecting the environment.



Nalae District

Nalae

Nalae is a mountainous district located in the southwest of Luang Namtha Province. It is bisected lengthways by the Nam Tha River, a traditional trading route to other towns and provinces.

Nalae is home to the Khmu people (82%), Tai Lue communities settled along the river. Like many of the ethnic groups in northern Laos, the Khmu are not Buddhist, but practice their own form of animism.



Nam Tha River Life Adventure

A fantastic way to explore nature and life in Nalae District is by boat. Whether in a motorized wooden local boat, by kayak or on a raft this trip will be an unforgettable journey.

Tourists can stop over at Khonekham Village where there is a community lodge situated on the bank of the river. This village is also famous for beautiful textile products.



Festivals in Luang Namtha Province

Almost every month of the year there is either a local festival or celebration in Luang Namtha. Because so many different ethnic groups live in the province there is a lot of variety in the cultural practices and rituals performed at each of these colorful events. If you are in Luang Namtha while any of the festivals below are taking place you will surely be welcomed and asked to join the fun. Please feel free to participate, however do remember that most of the festivals below are based on religious beliefs and your local hosts will appreciate it if you respect local codes of behavior. For more information about the festivals on this panel please speak with the information center staff.



Local Festivals

January

- Akha and Lahu New Year
- Hmong New Year - Seda New Year
- Lanten and Yao New Year
- Panna and Tai Neua New Year
- “Spirit of the New Rice Festival” Khmu and other Mon-Khmer speaking ethnic groups

April

- “Poi Festival” in Muang Sing, Tai Lue ethnic group
- “Kao Ban Festival” Akha ethnic group
- “Pii Mai Lao” Lao New Year
- “Boun Bang Fai” Rocket Festival

June

- “Feeding the Spirit of the City Pillar”
Lao Yuan ethnic group
- “Vor Salee Festival” Lahu ethnic group

September

- “Swidden Ricefield Festival” Performed by the Lahu ethnic group before the harvest.
- Boat Racing Festival.

October

- “Boun Souang Heua” boat races in Namtha District



Major Buddhist Festivals

February

Boun Maka Bousa – This festival is held on the full moon to commemorate the speech given by the Lord Buddha to 1,250 enlightened monks that gathered spontaneously, without prior notice. In the evening, the faithful visit local temples and circumambulate the vat three times with candles in a ceremony known as *vien tiene*.

Boun Khao Chi – A special offering of sticky rice is coated with eggs then roasted and offered to monks. This ceremony is associated with Maka Bousa.

May

Boun Visakha Bousa – This festival celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of the Lord Buddha. It is held on the 15th day of the 6th lunar month. Beautiful candlelit processions take place in the evening.

July

Boun Khao Pansa – This festival, held on the full moon, marks the beginning of Buddhist lent, a three month period where monks are required to stay within their vat to meditate and focus on darma studies. Lao men are traditionally ordained as monks during this time.

August

Boun Khao Padap Din – Special offerings are made to the deceased on the new moon of the 9th lunar month.

September

Boun Khao Salak – Offerings including daily necessities such as books, pens, sugar and coffee are made to specific monks based on a lottery system. Lao people also give beautiful wax flower candles to the monks to gain merit.

October

Boun Ork Pansa – Held on the full moon which marks the end of the rainy season, monks who were ordained for the three month lent period leave the vat and rejoin their families. During the evening of Van Ork Pansa, in a charming ceremony small banana-leaf boats called *heua fai* are launched on rivers with offerings of incense, candles and small amounts of money to bring luck and prosperity.

November

Boun That Xieng Teung – Muang Sing's most famous festival attracts a large crowd of people from around the province as well as Tai Lue Buddhists from as far away as Myanmar, China and Thailand.

Where to stay

★★★★ Hongching Hotel

No.of room : 96
Room Rate USD 31 - 47
Address: Luangnamtha Road ,Viengkham
Village, LuangNamtha District.
Tel: +856-86 212150
Mobile: +856-20 23350809
www. Hongching.com



★★★ Sokxaytone Resort

No.of room : 20
Room Rate USD 19
Address: Oudomsay 2 Road,
Viengkham Village, LuangNamtha District.
Tel: +856-86 212078
Fax: +086 212079
Mobile: +856-20 55676490
www. Sokxay-Phone-Resort.com



Dokchampa Hotel ★



Luang Namtha Road,
Phonexay Village, Luang Namtha District,
Luang Namtha Province.
Tel: +856-86 260003, 5110047
Fax: +086 212227, 211075
Email: Dokchampahotel9@gmail.com
www. dokchampahotel.com

Singchalern Hotel ★



Singchalern Village,
Sing District Luang Namtha Province.
Tel: +856-86 312347
www: Insubanpha.com
www. Singchalern.com

Boat landing Guesthouse



No.of room : 11
Room Rate USD 35-55
Address: Kon Village, Luang Namtha Dis-
trict and Province.
Tel: +856-86 312398
Mobile: +856-20 55578237
Fax: +086-312329
www.Theboatlanding.com

Khamking Guesthouse



No.of room : 21
Room Rate USD 10-13
Address: Phonexay Village, Luang Namtha
District and Province.
Tel: +856-86 312238
Mobile: +856-20 55111300,
2390777, 55487449
Fax: +086-312238



Phouiu Guesthouse

No.of room 14

Room Rate USD 19-32

Address: Singchalern Village, Sing District
Luang Namtha Province.

Tel: +856-86 400012

Mobile: +856-20 55686900, 55985565,
55985557



Shenjeuter Guesthouse

No.of room : 19

Room Rate USD 8-13

Address Lak 2 Road, Nongbouvieng Village,
Luang Namtha District and Province.

Tel: +856-86 212086

Mobile: +856-20 55686888, 55488999

Email: info@shenjeuterguesthouse.com

www. shenjeuterguesthouse.com



Taidam Guesthouse

No.of room :14

Room Rate USD 70

Address: Nongbouvieng Village,
Luang Namtha District and Province.

Tel: +856-86 030 9200794

Mobile: +856-20 54214299



Vila Guesthouse

No.of room : 18

Room Rate USD 10-13

Address: Nongbouvieng, Luang Namtha
District and Province.

Tel: +856-86 312425

Mobile: +856-20 55886699

Fax:+856-86 312056

Email: Vilaguesthose@yahoo.com



Zuela Guesthouse



No.of room : 15
Room Rate USD 70-15
Address : Luang Namtha Road, xay Village,
Luangnamtha District and Province.
Tel: +856-86 212058
Mobile: +856-20 55886694, 97206888,
22063888
Email: Vilaguesthose@yahoo.com
www. Zuela-laos.com



Ampy Guesthouse



No. of room : 9
Room Rate USD 7-10
Address: Phonexay Village, Luang Namtha
District and Province.
Mobile: +856-20 55196068, 56589306



Anouluck Guesthouse



No.of room : 14
Room Rate USD 8-13
Address: Viengkham Village, Luang Namtha
District and Province, Lao PDR.
Tel: +856-86 212056
Mobile: +856-20 55364791, 58017998,
55364791



Anousone Guesthouse



No.of room : 13
Room Rate USD 70-80
Address: Chiengjai Village, Sing District and
Province, Lao PDR.
Mobile: +856-20 55086622, 54990678



Bouasone Guesthouse



No.of room : 15
Room Rate USD 8-15
Kaisone Road
Address: Chiengjai Village, Sing District.
Tel: +856-86 211251
Mobile: +856-20 98482345, 55486013



Champadeang Guesthouse



No.of room : 15
Room Rate USD 80
Address: Chiengjai Village, Sing District.
Tel: +856-86 030 9204473
Mobile: +856-20 55785565, 22996669



Chantemmeng Guesthouse



No.of room : 10
Room Rate USD 70-80
Address: Chiengjai Village, Sing District.
Mobile: +856-20 99797434, 55110593



Dandnuea Guesthouse

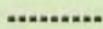


No.of room : 8
Room Rate USD 70-80
Address: Chiengjai Village, Sing District.
Mobile: +856-20 99797434, 55110593





Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Road |  | Provincial Border |
|  | Route Indicator |  | Information Center |
|  | Capital of Province | | |
|  | District | | |

Oudomxay Province

- Location:** Northern part of the country
- Total area:** 15,370 square kilometers
- Population:** 299,935 (2010)
- Districts:** Xay, La, Namor, Nga, Beng, Hoon and Pakbeng
- Capital:** Xay

Oudomxay is populated by some 23 ethnic minorities mainly Hmong, Ekor (Akha) and Khmu.

Adventurous eco-tourism tours can be arranged from village to village with travel either by ox cart or on foot. Tad Lak Sip Et Waterfall at Km 11 in Muang Xay District, as well as hot springs and temples at Muang La District and Phouxay Mountain are among some of the outstanding natural scenery worth visiting when in the area.

Oudomxay's proximity to China has brought the province rapid economic growth and infrastructure developments, including good road access to the provincial capital, Xay District.





Natural

Chom Ong Cave

In January 2009 an international team of cave researchers conducted a very successful expedition to Oudomxay in Northern Laos. The most significant finding and major highlight since the expeditions in northern Laos started in 2002 is the exploration of the Chom Ong Cave System 45 km northwest of Oudomxay town near the village of Ban Chom Ong.

The system stretches along a 4 km long mountain ridge and has a parallel running and interconnecting fossil and river passage. It was explored in three explorations (2009, 2010 and 2011) to a length of about 18.4 km with some small, unpromising side passages remaining.

It ranks now as the 2nd longest cave in Laos and the 9th longest in whole South East Asia. The typical passage dimension is 20-25 m width and 20-30 m height. There are two overlaying passages, a river and a fossil passage, which are linked at one huge hall with 100 m length, 30 m width and ceiling heights of 30-50 m. The cave is a trough cave and could be entered with exploration equipment near the small stream inlet in the north and left at the outflow in the south. The full traverse would take about 5 hours with additional 1 and 3 hours respectively return walking time to Chom Ong village! But this traverse is at least for now not recommended for tourists as several climbing parts and slippery river walks are unavoidable

The cave is not only one of the longest caves in Southeast Asia but also by opinion of the cave exploration team one of the most beautiful and interesting caves. With its two very different passages it has a diversity that is very rare. It impresses with several huge stalacmite and stalactite formations as well as vast glittering parts, sinther basins but also geologically interesting parts (shields, floe calcite etc.). It is said that Chom Ong cave is the most beautiful and diverse cave in Lao PDR.



Natural Attractions



F forests



Forests characterize the picture of Oudomxay province. Giant trees are breathtaking, but the forests are more - a whole cosmos of life. If silently walking through the forest reptiles like saurian and snakes are found easily. These shy animals are threatened in more populated and industrialized areas but are still very numerous in natural forests as here in northern Laos. Besides a high variety of vertebrates the pristine forests harbor an infinite number of insects of which butterflies are among the most colorful. A patient explorer will easily find all kinds of beetles, ants and millipedes crawling on the forest ground.

The forests of northern Laos are also home to a huge amount of different plants. Very particular trees are found with characteristic buttress roots. This characteristic roots anchor the trees in the rainforests on the thin and poor humus layer where roots can't go deep. Furthermore, they help gather nutrients and minerals from the ground.



Culture

Khamu



Khamu form the biggest ethnic group in Oudomxay province, being part of the Lao Thoeng, the Upland Lao. They are considered as the 'guardians of the land' and have settled in all northern provinces of Laos. Living in the mountains, dry-rice cultivation and slash-and-burn techniques characterize their traditional economic activity.



Culture

Hmong

Hmong people are part of the Lao Soung, the “High Land Lao”. They came to the area that is now Lao PDR around 150 years ago after they lived several thousand years in the region of Southern China. Today, around 450,000 Hmong are located in the mountainous areas of northern Laos. They generate their income mainly through dry-rice cultivation and slash-and-burn techniques. Their traditional beliefs are strongly related to Animism and Shamanism. In Oudomxay they are the second biggest ethnic group after Khmu people.



Culture

Akha

Akha are the fourth biggest ethnic group in Oudomxay and form part of the Lao Soung like the Hmong people. Akha immigrated from the Tibetan Plateau, northwest of Oudomxay, several hundred years ago. Their language is part of the Tibeto-Burmese linguistic family. Akha villages are traditionally situated in remote areas. However, coming for example to Oudomxay town market, Akha women are easily recognisable by their traditional hat, covered with coins representing the wealth of the household.



Activities in Town



Phu That Stupa

Phu that Stupa (full name Xaymungkhun Ratanamingmuang Stupa) is the most prominent hill top stupa in Oudomxay, located in the center of the Muang Xay town. The stupa was built to allow all people of the region to come together, to celebrate religious festivals and tradition (give alms to the monks, purify themselves, make offerings to ancestors, etc.).

It is presumed that the stupa was originally built by Tai Leu during the time when Xaysettha was King of Laos (14th century).

Every full moon day religious celebrations are held at the stupa.

The stupa measures 18 m from the foundation to the top. The foundation itself also measures 18 m x 18 m.



Oudomxay Museum



Oudomxay Museum is located on top of Phou Sebey in Ban Cheang of Oudomxay town. The name of the mountain comes from the French army camp that was situated there. The French army called the mountain “C.B.” - the French pronunciation of this abbreviation eventually transformed into the hills current Lao name “Sebey”.



Handicraft Shopping



Thai Lue cotton handicraft are on offer in Ban Phoxay, in Xay Town. The shop is an excellent place to discover very beautiful samples and a variety of models and colors of cotton handicraft products.

The Productivity and Marketing Center (PMC) of Oudomxay, supported by UNIDO is a center for promoting local village entrepreneurship and value-added goods. These goods can be seen and purchased in the center. The range of goods



comprises specialties Such as sesame oils, essential oils from Houn and La district of Oudomxay Province, *posa*. bamboo and banana paper products, embroidery from *kheuapiad* and cotton, and broom grass products.



Vat Ban Cheng and the Tree of Life



The Tree of Life, also known as manikoth tree, grows in the mythical forest of Hinmapan. A legend associated with this tree goes as follows:

The tree is very old (already 4,479 years). One day, this very special tree bore a very large

fruit (around 260 cm) with a diameter. It was so big none of animals could eat it. When it finally fell, its enormous weight caused an earthquake that caused so much damage that instilled the Naga, the people and all other living with fear beings.



Toung Dai Vietnamese Friendship Monument



The Toung Dai Vietnamese monument (Lao Vietnamese friendship monument) is located in Montai village of Xay Town on the way to Phongsaly about 1.5 km from the town

center. It was erected to honor Vietnamese soldiers who fought alongside their Lao comrades for the independence of Lao PDR. Toung Dai monument is open daily from sunrise to sunset.

Trekking



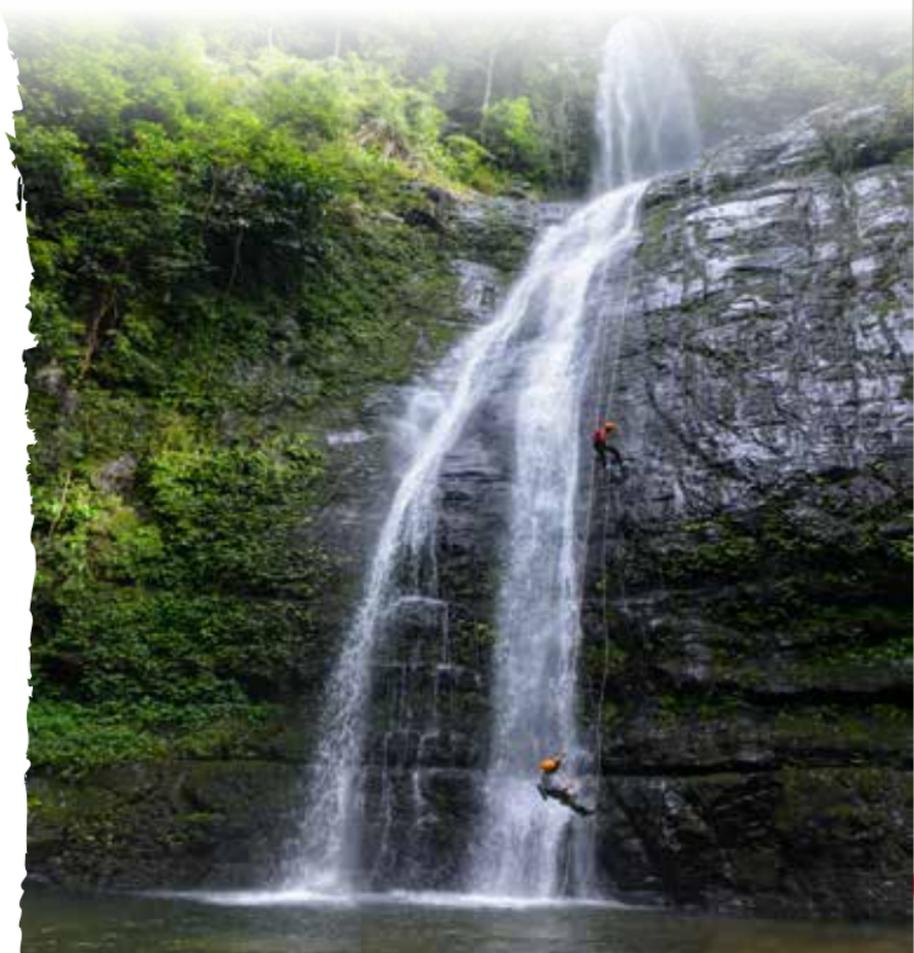
Pak Beng

The tour starts from Pak Beng town on the Mekong River and can be done as a half-day tour to the cave or in combination with half-day trekking making it a one-day tour. If you opt for the tour combining the cave trip and a trekking tour you will pass several natural attractions like breathtaking views of the Mekong and surrounding mountains. Along the way the local guides will explain traditional hunting techniques share their knowledge about the secrets of medicinal plants, and provide details on their cultivation practices.



The Nam Kat Waterfall and Nature Park

Venture into the Phou Hippi Provincial Protected Area, an area extending to some 19,700 Ha containing a mixture of pristine old-growth jungle, limestone outcrops and mountains surrounding the eastern side of Oudomxay town. Here, enjoy a jungle walk to Nam Kat waterfall, a series of cascades for about 20m height in total, the final drop being, a 10m tumble to a large pool below. The waterfall is surrounded by a kingdom of boulders, large and small creating a series of beautiful smaller waterfalls along the stream. Some of these boulders can seat 5 to 15 people. Pristine forest of giant dipterocarps (nyang oil tree) and a host of other trees and herbs surrounds the falls adding to the glorious seclusion of the site 24 km from Oudomxay town. If you are quiet you may hear the sound of monkeys crash-landing on the tree branches as you approach the falls.

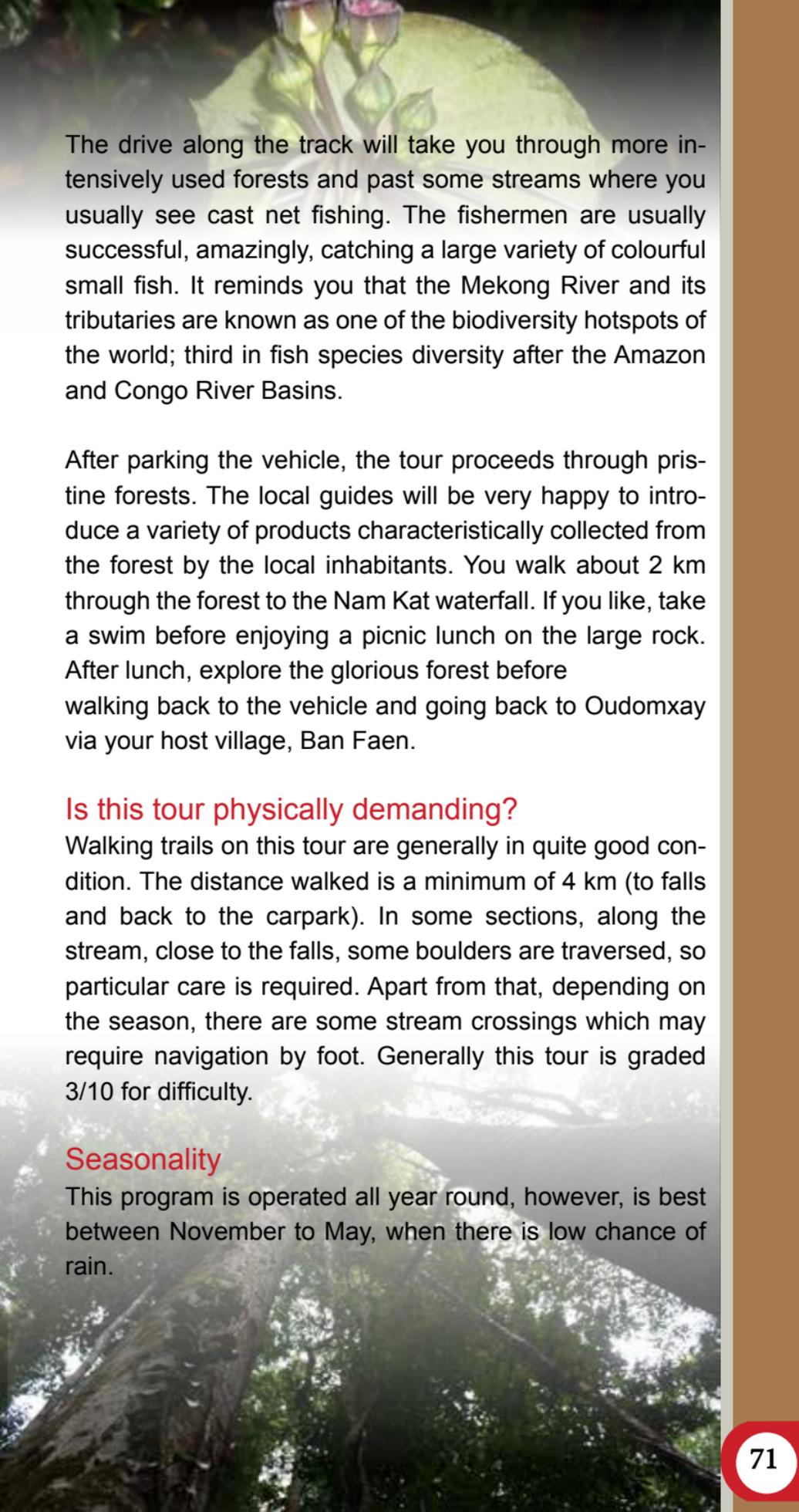


Nam kat Community-based Tourism

For those wanting to experience a guided walk with those holding the traditional knowledge of this forest, Ban Faen Village Community-based Tourism programs are the best way to see this area. Here, village guides from the host village of the waterfall will take you through their traditional lands, providing an opportunity to learn the beliefs, as well as the bushskills of the local people. You can opt to let your village guide take you straight into the Nature Park along the 13km track following the stream; or for those wishing to take the spectacular trek through the forests over the mountain to Nam Kat waterfall. The Ban Faen village programs are available by booking through the Provincial Tourism Information Office. Each of these programs start in Oudomxay town where your Provincial guide will take you to Ban Faen before entering the forest.

Trip 1: One-day trip to Nam Kat waterfall and pristine forest

This trip starts at the Provincial Tourism Department at 7:30AM where you will meet your provincial guide, and be driven most of the way to the waterfall. Your first stop will be the central market of Oudomxay where original Lao snacks and food will be introduced and the food for your picnic lunch will be arranged. After driving for about one hour into the hills east of Oudomxay, the trek starts in the middle of nature. Meanwhile you have already picked-up your village guide from Ban Faen, and you have been driven into the forest as far as the season will permit (usually 13km from Ban Faen).

A person wearing a green shirt is holding a large, vibrant green fish. The background is a lush, green forest with sunlight filtering through the trees.

The drive along the track will take you through more intensively used forests and past some streams where you usually see cast net fishing. The fishermen are usually successful, amazingly, catching a large variety of colourful small fish. It reminds you that the Mekong River and its tributaries are known as one of the biodiversity hotspots of the world; third in fish species diversity after the Amazon and Congo River Basins.

After parking the vehicle, the tour proceeds through pristine forests. The local guides will be very happy to introduce a variety of products characteristically collected from the forest by the local inhabitants. You walk about 2 km through the forest to the Nam Kat waterfall. If you like, take a swim before enjoying a picnic lunch on the large rock. After lunch, explore the glorious forest before walking back to the vehicle and going back to Oudomxay via your host village, Ban Faen.

Is this tour physically demanding?

Walking trails on this tour are generally in quite good condition. The distance walked is a minimum of 4 km (to falls and back to the carpark). In some sections, along the stream, close to the falls, some boulders are traversed, so particular care is required. Apart from that, depending on the season, there are some stream crossings which may require navigation by foot. Generally this tour is graded 3/10 for difficulty.

Seasonality

This program is operated all year round, however, is best between November to May, when there is low chance of rain.

Trip 2: One-day Circuit Trek - Phou Pha Daeng Mountain, Nam Kat waterfall

A climb over Pha Daeng Cliffs (Red-cliffs) is a more direct line from Ban Faen Village to Nam Kat waterfall. This trek offers a mountain top picnic lunch with stunning views at over 1200m ASL. Like the Nam Kat tour (trip 1), this Lao adventure starts in Oudomxay (7:30AM) with your Provincial guide, and calls into the central market on the way to Ban Faen. This is where the trek differs remarkably, climbing straight up the mountain trail, and altogether ascending 500m altitude before reaching the rocky cliffs and peak of Pha Daeng where you have earned your picnic lunch and a grand view of the valley below. Here, pines and wispy grass, then change into lush tropical growth as you descend your way down to the Nam Kat Valley. You are rewarded with an invigorating mid-afternoon swim in the Nam Kat waterfall pool, before you head back along the seasonal road, crossing through a number of streams to rendezvous with your transport back to Ban Faen and then on to Oudomxay.

Is this tour physically demanding?

This trek, a total of about 13.5km, offers the challenge of an ascent of 500m altitude, of course the descent. The trail is a narrow mountain walking track. Like Trip 1, some sections along the stream, close to the falls, require the crossing of boulders, so particular care is required then as well as on the mountain. Generally this tour is graded 7/10 for difficulty.

Seasonality

This circuit trek operates between November and April, when there is low chance of rain.



Your host villages

Both your host villages are of Tai Lue ethnicity. According to village elders, the Tai Lue people moved into the wide open Nam Beng valley from southern China as early as the 10th century AD. Their influence in the valley increased, living as Buddhists side by side with their Khom predecessors, sharing the same fields.

Ban Thameun village

Ban Thameun village, of predominantly Tai Lue ethnicity, received its name from a Khammu man by the same name who founded it. Tad Nam Chae waterfall is one of the examples of this village's natural assets. The 4km trek into the waterfall will allow you to ask about traditional medicines and other uses gained from various plants both in cultivated fields and pristine forest along the way. The village is well known for their variety of handicrafts, and this program focuses on the traditional textile weaving, but if you are lucky you may encounter cotton processing, basket weaving, or blacksmithing at work as you pass through the village, depending on the season.





After returning to Ban Thameun in the mid-afternoon you will be shown how local villagers weave textiles. Local women will demonstrate how to weave using a frame loom with multiple peddles directing the thread through the warp to produce the Tai Lue patterns. You can operate a loom for yourself to produce a part of a pattern handed down for countless generations of Tai Lue families.

Move up the road another 6km to meet your homestay hosts in Ban Yor village. After dining you can sit back, and discover some of the musical skills as well as dancing demonstration by these Tai Lue people, before retiring for the night.





The next morning, your village trainers will show you how to process the cotton threads and dye textiles using natural dyes from plants gathered locally. Here you move on to try your hand at pottery Ban Yor style, learn what type of clay to use, how to prepare it and “throw” your own pot on the potter’s wheel before decorating it.

While your pottery guide prepares the kiln, let your pottery air-dry, and try your hand at bamboo basket weaving, check how nimble your fingers are with some of the finer baskets used in everyday village life. Finally it’s time to take pottery to the kiln for firing.



Muang Pakbeng Town

Welcome to Pak Beng town, situated on the narrow banks between the Mekong and Beng river, in the south west of Oudomxay province. Pak Beng, which means “mouth of Beng river” offers a variety of tourism services including numerous hotels, guesthouses and restaurants.

It is a popular location for taking a rest after a long boat cruise on a Mekong. During your stay you can visit the colorful market and the temples in town, and discover the unknown hinterland of the district.

As an important doorway to Oudomxay province you can continue your journey from Pakbeng by traveling via Xay and La District to Muang Koua, Nong Khiew, Phongsaly, Oudomxay town, Vietnam and China.



Reasons to stay longer in Muang Pakbeng

- Visit Sichomcheng and Kotkor Temple.
- Visit the handicraft shop and see how the products are made in Ban Don.
- Enjoy the markets.
- Discover the unknown hinterland and explore the Tae Forest at Ban Mokven.
- Walk around Muang Pak Beng town and enjoy the wonderful panorama over the Mekong river bank (viewpoint).
- Experience the warm hospitality of people and unknown spots by guided bike tours (Pakbeng Lodge).
- Enjoy the different restaurants and accommodations.
- Spoil yourself with a sauna and massage.
- Take a trip to Muang Xay town and experience life on the Khmu village on the way to Muang Houn.
- Visit Phou Lang Cave.
- Visit Phou Ngeum Cave and the pristine Forest around there.



Where to Stay

Charming Lao Hotel



No. of room : 17
Room Rate USD 50 - 150
Address: Vang Hai Road, Vang Hai Village,
Xay District, Oudomxay Province.
Tel: +856-81 212881
Fax: +081-212882
Email: sales@charminglaohotel.com
www. CharmingLaohotel.com

Luangsay Lodge



No. of room : 20
Room Rate USD 409 - 478
Address: Don kham Village, Pakbeng District,
Oudomxay Province.
Tel: +856-81, 212297, 212296
Fax: +081-215985
www. The Luang Say Lodge and Cruises.com

Phetsokxai Hotel



No. of room : 29
Room Rate USD 50 - 60
Address: Donkham Village, Pakbeng
District, Oudomxay Province .
Tel: +856-81212299
Fax: 081 212629
www.phetsoksai Hotel.com

Pakbeng Lodge



No. of room : 28
Room Rate USD 95 - 176
Address: Donkham Village, Pakbeng
District, Oudomxay Province.
Tel: +856-81 212304
Fax: +081- 212629
www.pakbeng Lodge .com

Monsavan Guesthouse



No. of room : 7
Room Rate USD 13 - 30
Address : 2 Lak Road, Pakbeng Village,
Pakbeng District Oudomxay Province
Tel: +856-81 211222
Mobile: +856 20 55771935
Fax: 081 212619



Sengary Guesthouse



No. of room : 17
Room Rate USD 13-15
Address: Nongmengda, Xay City,
Oudomxay Province.
Tel: +856-81 211222
Mobile: +856-20 55333547, 56813333



Villa KeoSeumSack Guesthouse



No. of room : 16
Room Rate USD 15-25
Address: 13 North Road, Navannai Village,
Xay City, Oudomxay Province.
Mobile: +856-20 55580674
Tel: +856-81 312170
Fax: 081 312092
[www. Seumsack@hotmail.com](mailto:www.Seumsack@hotmail.com)



Chingsang Hotel

Vanghai Village, Xay District,
Oudomxay Province.
Tel: +856-81 212786

Dengsavant Hotel

Vanghai Village, Xay District,
Oudomxay Province.
Tel: +856-81 212696

Midtapab Hotel

Nongmengda Village, Xay District,
Oudomxay Province.
Tel: +856-81 212915
Mobile: +856-20 55580933

Oudomkham Hotel

Nalao Village, Xay District,
Oudomxay Province.
Mobile: +856-20 55780089

Rakham Hotel

Dontai Village, La District,
Oudomxay Province.
Mobile: +856-20 22225882

Xaysana Hotel

Navannai Village, Xay District,
Oudomxay Province.
Tel: +856-81 312091

Singthong Hotel

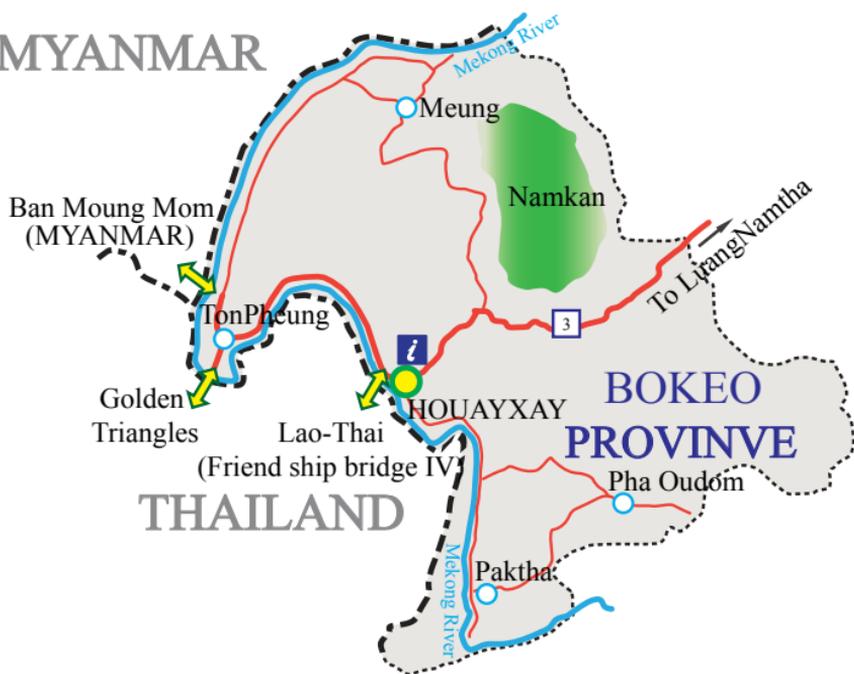
Nongleng Village, Xay District,
Oudomxay Province.
Tel: +856-81 312061

SuLin Hotel

Napang Village, Houn District,
Oudomxay Province.
Mobile: +856-20 54401081



MYANMAR



Road



Route Indicator



Capital of Province



District



International Border Crossing



International Border



Provincial Border



Information Center



National Protected Area (NPA)

Bokeo Province

Location:	Northwestern Laos
Total area:	6,196 square kilometers
Population:	165,661
Districts:	Houay Xay, Ton Pheung, Meung, ha-oudom and Paktha
Capital:	Houay Xay

Bokeo is located in the northwestern part of Laos, 70% of the land is mountainous. Bokeo shares a 35 km on Land and the rest a 127 km of the Mekong River border with Thailand to the west, a 98 km with Myanmar, to the northeast with Luang Namtha and to the southeast with Oudomxay to the south with Xayabouly.

Sapphire is the most important mines and has been known for many centuries. Many historical sites could be found for instance; the trails of the city of Souvannakhomkham, one of the ancient cities in the 14th century. Ancient rocks namely; Hingsivaling and Nhonee (the rocky shape of male and female organs) found in the 5th century in Tonfeuung.

Before the foundation of Lao PDR. Bokeo was a town that was fallen under the administration of the old and new colonialism. Since 1975 Bokeo was established as the branch of Luang Namtha Province. The name of Bokeo represented as there are many mines of sapphires.

The named "Bokeo" means the pits of sapphire or called "Keo-Praseuth" because it is a rich mining center for gold and sapphire. The Province is home to a large number of ethnic minorities, each with their own lifestyle and customs. Sapphire is the most important mines and has been known for many centuries.

Bokeo Province is in northern Laos, with its capital extending along the bank of the Mekong River. The three country borders' intersection (Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar), known as the "Golden Triangle", is located here. It has more than 400 villages, each with their own lifestyles and customs.

The most lucrative occupation in Bokeo is gold panning and digging for precious stones.

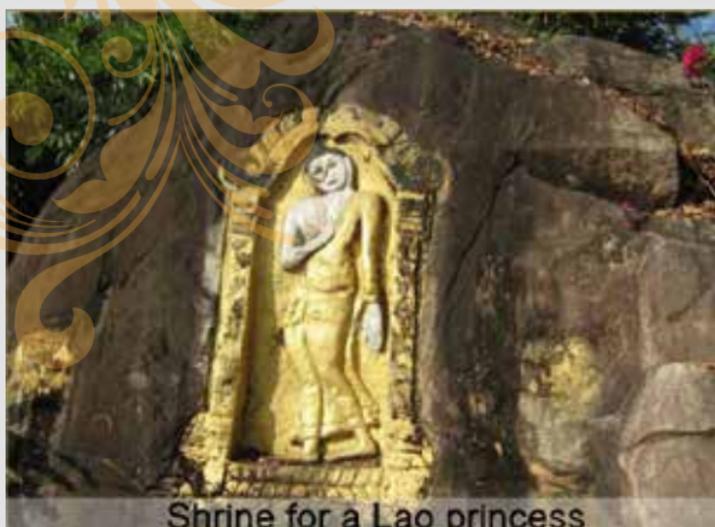


Historic Bokeo

Welcome to historic Bokeo Province. Located in the once notorious Golden Triangle region, forming Laos' border with Thailand and Myanmar, this area has played an important role in 20th century history. Bokeo also offers visitors an insight into earlier eras of religion, royalty, war and trade, with remarkable archeological relics and ancient temples.

Located about one hour north of Houay Xay is the remarkable Souvannahkhomkham archeological site. A network of temples, stupas and Buddha statues, it was first established during the 5th century and has been re-built many times. The current ruins date back to the Lane Xang Kingdom from the 14th to 16th century. The area is actually comprised of 40 sites spanning 10,000 hectares. Highlights include a 7 metre high Buddha statue, one of the biggest in Laos, which was long ago raided for treasures concealed inside. Souvannahkhomkham is accessible only by 4WD and difficult to find without the assistance of an experienced guide.

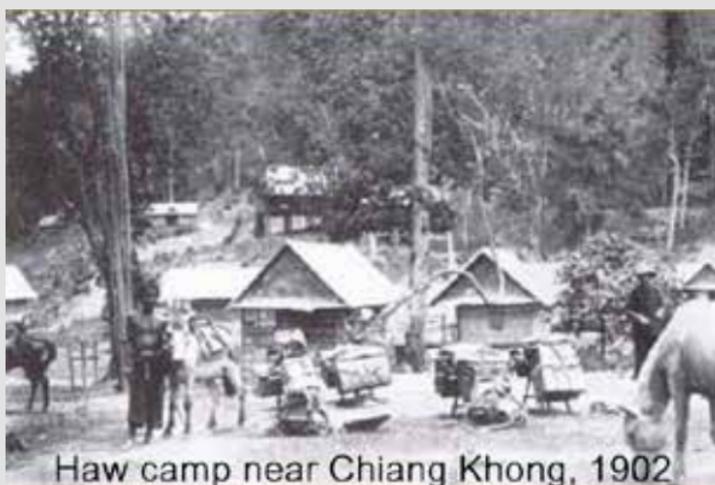
Bokeo Province is historically located on the path of ancient trade routes, particularly those of Muslim Yunnanese traders and soldiers traveling south from China. In Laos, these people were known as the 'Haw' and still live here today in small numbers. This style of caravan trade flourished in the 19th century, using primarily mules and horses for their ability to carry heavy loads. Heading south, traders carried tea, silk, salt, clothing, metal goods and fresh vegetables; on the northbound journey traders returned with woods for dyeing cloth, stick lac, tobacco, opium and raw cotton.



Shrine for a Lao princess



Buddha at Souvannahkhomkham



Haw camp near Chiang Khong, 1902

In Houay Xay town there are two temples (Vat) of particular historical significance. Just off the main street is Vat Jom Khao Manilat, built from teak around 1880 and still busy with worshippers today. It is also home to a stele-house which dates back to the mid 15th century. In Ban Khone Keo, at the southern end of the main town, is beautiful Vat Khone Keo Xayaram, thought to be around 1000 years old. Further out of town is Vat Pha Kham, which according to legend has a stupa containing 3 hairs of the Buddha.

At Ban Pack Ngao, on the road to Ban Nam Keung and Nam Nyorn waterfall, you can stop to see in the rock formations a sculpture of a Lao princess, daughter of Lane Xang King Chao Anouvong, who is believed to have died at this point in the river.

Fort Carnot was constructed by French colonial authorities in 1900 to monitor the river and border, positioned on a hilltop to overlook the Mekong and town. A similar French fort still stands in the town of Muang Sing, Luang Namtha Province. However Fort Carnot is the best preserved French military building in Laos. Still in tact are two watch-towers, a kitchen and prison cell, and tunnels leading to external guard houses. Off limits to foreign tourists up until very recently, due to use by the Lao army, the site is a picturesque relic of the region's turbulent history and has now been partially restored on of the former barracks now becomes an exhibition on local history and ethnic culture and in side the northern watch tower a viewing platform has been installed allowing visitors to over look the Golden Triangle.

Years later during the Second Indochinese War of the 1960s and 1970s, Bokeo was once again a temporary home to foreign troops. Nam Nyu in Meuang Meung district north of Houay Xay is the site of an old American army base, still in tact is a small complex of jail cells.



US Amy Base at Nam Nyu



Ruins of Fort Carnot

The Mekong in BoKeo



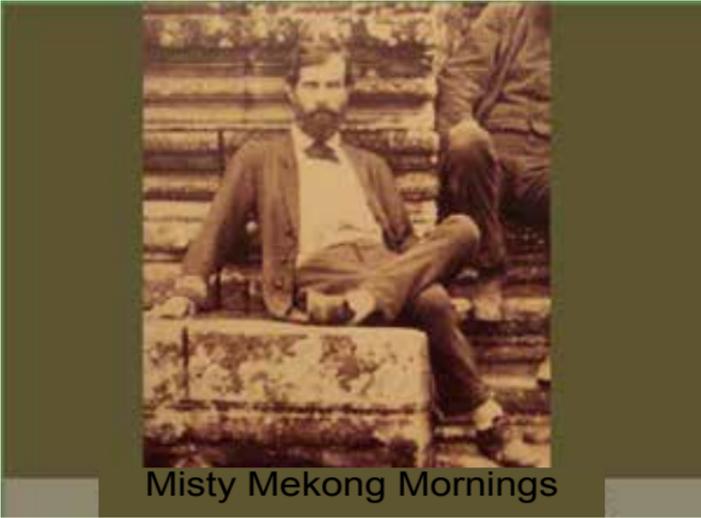
The Mekong (meaning 'mother Khong') is one of the world's great natural treasures. Originating in southern China, it snakes through Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and finally empties out into the South China Sea via the Mekong Delta in southern Vietnam. It is the world's 12th longest river, estimated to be around 4,800 kilometres long and its depth varies greatly according to the seasons. It has been a home, a means of transport and trade, and a source of food and water for generations.

Compared with other major rivers, navigation of the Mekong has been hampered by seasonal fluctuations in flow and depth and the presence of narrows passages with strong rapids. The first major systematic exploration of the Mekong, from its southern delta up to Yunnan, was undertaken by a French team led by Ernest Doudard de Lagrée and Francis Garnier from 1866 to 1868. Garnier was awarded the Victoria Medal by the Royal Geographic Society of London in 1870 for his navigation and mapping work.

For many years fragments of gold have washed up along the banks of the river here, adding to the local riches of silver and gemstones. You may see people squatting over their pans on the side of the river, sloshing the water



Misty Mekong Mornings



Misty Mekong Mornings



Panning for gold

and sand around to sift out the gold fragments. These days, only small amounts of gold are collected and here in town people mainly come down to pan on the weekends.

This small section of the river between Chiang Rai and Bokeo is the traditional fishing area for the famous *paa beuk* - the Mekong Giant Catfish. These huge fish grow up to 3 metres in length, weighing up to 300 kilograms. They are a rare delicacy and fetch high prices in Asian markets (just one fish can earn USD\$4000). However, The Mekong Giant Catfish is now a critically endangered species due to overfishing and changes to its migratory and breeding environments through damming and river infrastructure projects. This information was provided by WWF, leading the effort to conserve the Mekong Giant Catfish.

The major boat types seen around the river here include the *heua lek* - large boats with a 'house' at one end, usually painted green or blue. This style of boat is used for moving cargo to places such as Ton Pheung District to the north, or Pak Beng or Luang Prabang to the south. The medium size boats with a complete roof and open sides are generally used for transport, mainly by tourists. The smaller boats - *heua kham fang* - usually travel only between the two immigration checkpoints, or to nearby villages. The larger version of this boat with a roof can travel as far as Luang Namtha province.

Travel down the Mekong

Many tour operators can arrange for travel to Luang Prabang, or anywhere in between, by boat. There are usually 1 or 2 day journey options. It is a popular way to travel and can be preferable to a long bus trip (up to 14 hours Houay Xay to Luang Prabang). There are different price ranges, including the luxurious Luang Say Cruise. Trips usually involve a stay overnight in a village or riverside guest house, with the option to visit local markets or ethnic minority communities.



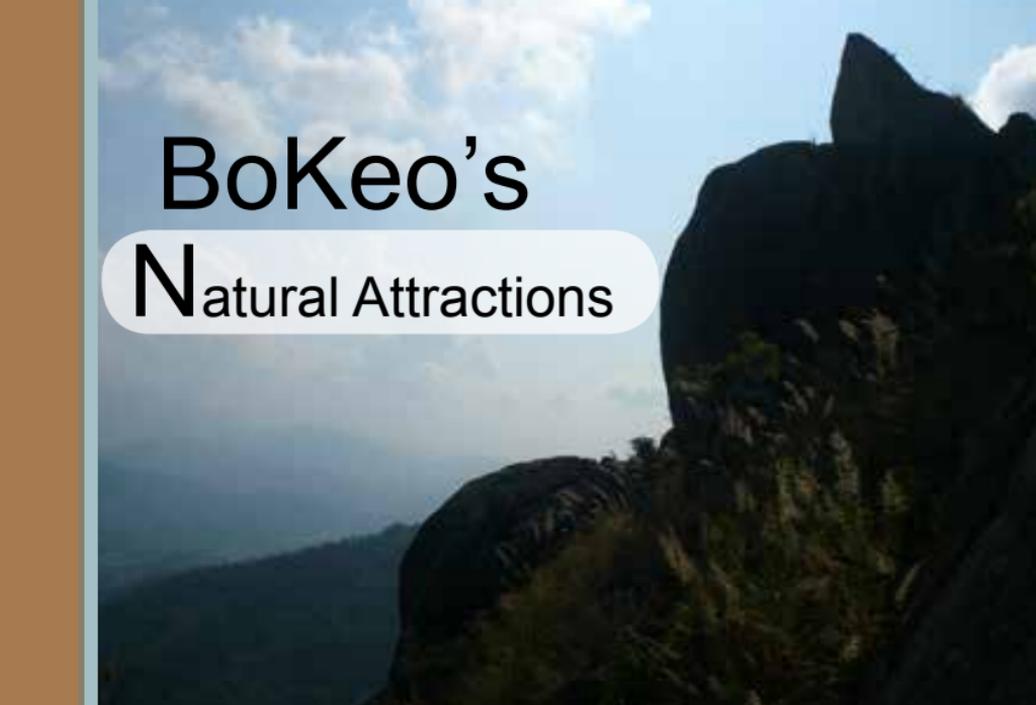
Hauling in a Mekong Giant Catfish



Slow boat to Luang Prabang



Cruising the Mekong



BoKeo's

Natural Attractions

Laos is becoming one of the world's foremost ecotourism tour destinations. Bokeo has a lot to offer people interested in nature and outdoor adventures - huge tracts of protected forest, clean waterfalls for swimming, beautiful cliffs, mountains and rock formations.

Heading North from Houay Xay around by road, you will reach Pack Ngao bridge 15 minutes town. On Saturdays and Sundays, fish restaurants open at the bridge and you can go swimming in the river. Continuing along the river road, you next reach a small village of the Panna people (a small Sino-Tibetan ethnic group) through which you can access Tad Nam Nyorn waterfall. The waterfall is small but very pretty, an easy 15 minutes walk from The village. During Pi Mai Lao in April locals come here for picnics and swimming. Also in this region there are Phou Pha Ngoi and Pha Daeng, scenic rock formations with beautiful mountain views.

The Northern highlands of Laos are home to an abundance of precious wildlife, with many species having only been recently 'discovered' by researchers. Remarkable mammals of Bokeo include the Slow Loris - a grey-brown



Nam Ngon Waterfall



At the Top of Phou Pha Ngoi

creature with bright round eyes and no tail, the Giant Squirrel - the world's largest tree-dwelling rodent, the Asiatic Black Bear - poached for its gall bladder and bile, believed to have potent properties. Most famous among them is the Black Crested Gibbon (*Nomascus Concolor*), a long-armed primate. In fact, the male gibbons are black while females are yellowish or grey-brown.

The forests of Bokeo are also home to an interesting array of birds, including the Lesser Racket-Tailed Drongo, identifiable by its two long narrow tail feathers which fan out at the ends. Others like the Scarlet Minivet, Blue-Winged Leafbird, Green Eared Barbet and Pale Blue Flycatcher make up a beautiful rainbow of treetop birdlife. Please see our Nam Kan NPA panel for more information.

Bokeo means 'Gem Mine' in Lao, based on sapphire and other precious stone deposits in the Province. Sapphires are processed in Ban Houay Sala, a Hmong village with a homestay opportunity, speak to Tourism Information staff if you are interested to arrange a visit to see the sapphire processing centre.

Muang Meung, 115 kilometres from Houay Xay, is a region rich with non-timber forest products. In the centre of the forest here, about 7 hours' trek in, stands a cluster of ancient tea trees many hundreds of years old. In this area too is Phou Nya Kha - a peak offering climbers spectacular views of Thailand and Myanmar.



Black Crested Gibbon



Houay Sala Sapphires



BoKeo Tea Leaves



BoKeo's Nam Kan NPA

The National Protected Area (NPA) system is a Government of Laos initiative designed to manage and protect the country's natural assets of unspoiled forest and biodiversity. Currently, approximately 15% of Laos is protected under NPAs. The Nam Kan NPA in Bokeo was established in 2008, taking the national total to 21 NPAs. It spans 77,500 hectares and is adjacent to Luang Namtha's Nam Ha NPA.

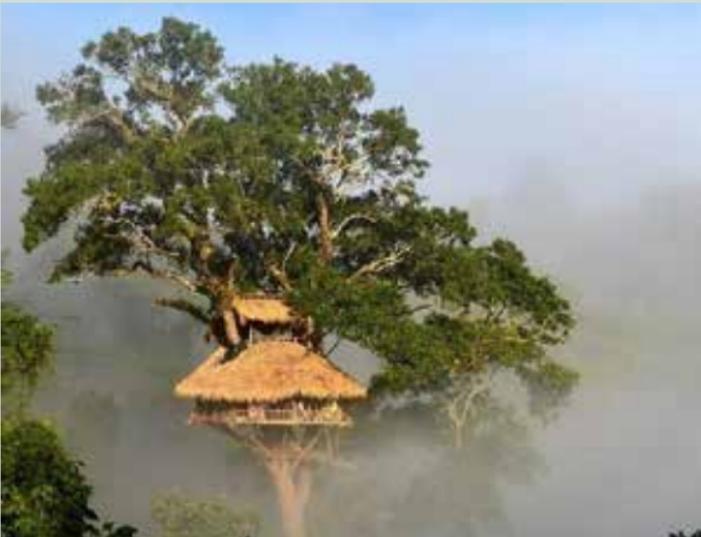
The Gibbon Experience is an innovative forest and wildlife conservation project channeling income from an ecotourism enterprise into a comprehensive program of locally-run natural resources management. The site, Nam Kan National Park, spans over 136,000 hectares of land bordering the Nam Kan NPA. The project uses a business model which values traditional knowledge, empowers local communities to sustainably manage their own environmental assets and ensures the ongoing survival of flora and fauna populations in Bokeo.

Visitors to the Gibbon Experience stay overnight in tree-top houses with spectacular views of the surrounding forest, and traverse the canopy using a network of zip lines, in search of the forest wildlife. There is also an option for extended deep forest trekking. Visit The Gibbon Experience office for more information.

Ecotourism is environmentally responsible tourism which



The Gibbon Experience



Treetop Accommodation

provides local people with income, reducing poverty and pressure on natural resources. For example, it gives incentives to local hunters to become tour guides instead of hunting. Ecotourism activities earn money for the National Protected Area office so that it can pay for patrols and other important protection activities.

ECOTOURISM DO's Take a guide on all tours. You will get a lot of interesting information about the forest and you will be supporting local people to protect the forest and wildlife.

Ask your guide and local villagers lots of questions about wildlife and the forest. This will increase everyone's awareness about what is special and interesting to tourists, and will make your tour much better.

Bring your own water bottle to minimize plastic waste. Accept people's generosity when offered. Often people will invite you into their homes to join a ceremony or festival. Don't be shy. Lao people want to get to know you and enjoy having visitors. **ECOTOURISM DONT's** Do not go trekking on your own. Yes, it may be cheaper to go on your own, but by doing so you are not supporting local people in the protection of the forests that you walk through. And you might get lost (trails are not marked)!

Do not collect plants, wildlife products or anything else that comes from the forest. Local people are allowed to use plants for their daily subsistence, but it is prohibited for outsiders to take anything out of the protected area. Leave them there for the next visitors to enjoy.

Do not litter. Please pack out all of your non-biodegradable waste and take it back to the town with you. Please, do not leave any rubbish in the villages. Villagers are still learning how to manage modern waste (plastic bags, wrappers, bottles/cans) and most villages do not yet have proper waste disposal sites.



Use a Local Guide



Discover Local Knowledge



Meet the Local Community



BoKeo's Ethnic Communities

Northern Laos is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in Asia. Bokeo province is home to a broad range of ethnic groups representing four significantly different ethnolinguistic families, and three major waves of migration.

Austro-Asiatic groups such as the Lamet and Khmu were the first people to inhabit this region. Sometime around 1200 years ago, the many Tai-Kadai groups - including the majority Tai Lao people - arrived in Laos and made their home primarily along the Mekong. Akha, Hmong and Yao groups have migrated into Laos from Tibet and Yunnan Province in Southern China within the last 200 - 300 years.

The Lahu people are also known as Mousseur, there are Black and White subgroups in Bokeo. They speak a Sino-Tibetan language and believe in animism. The Black Lahu are renowned for their highly skilled appliqué work, which adorns their skirts and jackets. Girls often wear their hair tied in a tight bun at their forehead, decorated with a comb and coloured yarn. White Lahu wear undyed white and brown natural cotton clothing.



Lahu Man Smoking Pipe



White Lahu Shaman



The Hmong are renowned for their strong cultural identity despite war, diaspora, resettlement and changing lifestyles. They are perhaps the most famous of Laos' ethnic minority groups, although not the largest. Hmong language is still widely used, Hmong festivals celebrated and traditional clothing is still produced and worn for these special occasions.

The Akha have their roots in the Tibetan plateaus and Yunnan Province; their ancestry is recorded in a strong oral history tradition. The Akha are guided by a unique belief system, called akhazhan, or 'the Akha way'. Akha villages feature wooden swings and are protected by gates which visitors should not touch.

The Yao Mun people are more commonly known as 'Lanten' (from the Chinese word for indigo). Women wear simple shorts and tunics of handmade natural indigo blue-black cotton with a distinctive white or magenta tassel down the front. The Lanten people of Ban Nam Chang have a small display about their Taoist religious practice.

The Tai Lue are famous for their silk and cotton production and weaving. Like many of the Tai peoples, their belief system blends Buddhism with animism. Animism is the belief in spirits of the natural and built world, such as spirits of the forest, cotton harvest, houses and river.

The ancestors of the Khmu are considered to be the 'first people' of Laos. Many Khmu women choose to wear market bought clothing these days rather than weave their own, but bamboo weaving is still a widely practiced craft among Khmu men.



Akha Village in Muang Meung



Lanen Villagers



Kmhmu Festival Celebration



Ethnic Handicrafts

Tourism in Bokeo Province presents a fantastic opportunity for local artisans and visitors alike. Producing new handicrafts for sale to tourists is a sustainable way for local people to earn extra income and at the same time maintain their traditional artisanal skills. It is a much better way for villagers to earn money than a one-off sale of their antiques and family heirlooms. By keeping these precious old items in their community, they retain their cultural property, memories and the examples on which to base new products. In Ban Don Chai village near Luang Namtha Province, Lamet, Hmong and Tai Lue people work together as part of the Bokeo Handicrafts Collective. Visit the Don Chai Roadside Station's Handicraft Demonstration and Sales Center to see the producers at work and purchase some exquisite textiles or other souvenirs.

The Hmong are skilled at various textile arts, including hemp production, beeswax batik printing and indigo dyeing. They are particularly well-known for their meticulous and precise decorative embroidery and appliqué. Traditionally these skills are used to adorn clothing, especially for occasions such as Hmong New Year. These days however, inventive Hmong women use their skills to create purses, toys, ornaments and other goodies



Lanten Boy Pulping Bamboo for Paper



Hmong Embroidery



White Lahu Cotton

The White Lahu people, at villages like Ban To Lae make a beautiful heavy natural cotton. It is a labour intensive process to plant, grow and harvest cotton, hand spin yarn, hand weave cloth on the loom and then hand sew the clothing. Akha women also hand produce heavy bolts of natural cotton. You may see them spinning cotton yarn with their unusual hand spindles, shaped like spinning tops.

It's usually women behind the arts and crafts of Laos, but in the case of Khmu bamboo weaving it is generally men who learn and practice the craft. A visit to a Khmu village shows that bamboo can be used to create almost anything a villager needs: storage and carry baskets, shelving, spoons, chairs, fish traps, rice cooker and of course the house itself!

Lanten People are known for their skill in making bamboo paper. you can see paper being made at Ban Nam Chang. Bamboo is pulped and boiled to make a watery solution, which is evenly poured across a fabric screen and left to dry in the sun. It is used mainly in religious ceremonies of the Lanten people, who practice Taoism. They also make carved wooden and paper masks, and dark blue indigo dyed cotton for clothing.

The Tai Lue are the master weavers of Laos, creating elaborate brocades in natural cotton and silk for religious and everyday purposes. They are also well known for their proficiency with natural dyes made from forest products such as leaves, flowers, woods and insects. some Tai Lue weavers in Bokeo export their goods to high quality textiles stores in Luang Prabang and beyond.



Paper Making at Ban Nam Chang



Cotton Weaving



Farming BorKeo Forests

Non timber forest Products (NTFPs) are all biological materials, excluding timber, harvested and used for food, tools, handicrafts, building, medicine, rituals and many more purposes. Traditional knowledge is central to the value of NTFPs, knowledge of when and how to harvest, how to process and store materials. Unfortunately, much of this knowledge is handed down by oral tradition, and can be easily lost with changing livelihoods and the passing of older generations.

The NTFPs themselves are also vulnerable products. Many communities report the increasing scarcity of forest products, such as rattan or cardamom, as forest areas shrink and farming of cash crops increases. Currently in Bokeo Province there are a range of projects and social enterprises aiming to preserve traditional knowledge of NTFPs, and create natural, organic products which have good potential in the international market. Look out for locally manufactured products when in Bokeo and throughout Laos.

Bokeo Social Enterprise is a local business, based in and around Ban Nam Keung, producing food, medicine and cosmetic products using NTFPs. Their products include a brown sugar glazed organic ginger candy, which



Traditional Bee Keeping



Bokeo Natural Ginger



Bokeo Social Enterprise Banana Liquor

also has stomach-soothing properties, Bokeo brown natural sugar canec (Nam Oy) products, and high quality banana liquor infused with cinnamon or cardamom.

Visit Bokeo during the cool season and you will see Ton Khaem - a type of broom grass - lining the road side and river banks to dry in the sun. They are then thrashed against the ground to remove tiny seeds. The branches are usually sold to Thai traders who make them into brooms, although local people also make them. The brooms are sold at the Houay Xay Talat Sao market, and at small village stores.

A number of villages and local social entrepreneurs are currently producing natural forest honey in Bokeo Province. Lao Jungle Honey is one such company, producing an international standard organic honey, natural beeswax lip balms and other beekeeping derived products.

Tea is a key local product, the leaves are harvested throughout the province and in particular from ancient tea trees in Muang Meung area. The leaves are often baked inside bamboo containers. Also from this area are mak ku, a kind of nut similar to a pine nut. They grow on old trees and must be broken out of a large hard gem-shaped shell.

Rattan is traditionally harvested throughout Bokeo - young rattan is used to make an edible jeow (dipping sauce). Unfortunately, as rattan becomes more scarce there is often little left to grow old enough to be made into bags, furniture or baskets.



Natural Broom Grass



Traditional Bokeo Tea Set



Festivals in Bokeo

Local Festivals

January

- Akha and Lahu New Year
- Hmong New Year
- Lanten and Yao New Year
- Panna and Tai Neua New Year
- “Spirit of the New Rice Festival” Khmu and Mon-Khmer speaking ethnic groups

February - March

- Kapok Flower Festival (Boun Dok Ngiew)

This is a major event in Bokeo Province, festivities are concentrated round Don Sao island upriver in Ton Pheung District. The festival incorporates market fairs, parties and dancing, and a local beauty pageant.

April

- “Kao Ban Festival” Akha ethnic group
- “Pi Mai Lao” Lao New Year
- “Boun Bang Fai” The Rocket Festival June
- “Vor Salee Festival” Lahu ethnic group

September

“Swidden Ricefield Festival” Performed by the Lahu ethnic group before the harvest.

Major Buddhist Festivalss

February / March - Boun Maka Bousa

This festival is held on the full moon to commemorate the speech given by the Lord Buddha to 1,250 enlightened monks that gathered spontaneously, without prior notice. In the evening, the faithful visit local temples and circumambulate the vat three times with candles in a ceremony



Kmhmu New Year



Blossoming Kapok Flowers



Lahu Girls in Traditional Dress

known as vien tian. Here in Bokeo, This is a special Festival and the locals build large bonfires late in the evening at the temples.

Boun Khao Chi: a special offering of sticky rice is coated with eggs then roasted and offered to monks. Deceased ancestors are called to come and receive alms at the temple. This ceremony is associated with Maka Bousa.

April - Pi Mai Lao

Lao New Year is a riotous three day festival of ceremonies, parties and water-throwing.

May - Boun Visakha Bousa

This festival celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of the Lord Buddha. It is held on the 15th day of the sixth lunar month. Beautiful candlelit processions take place in the evening.

July - Boun Khao Pansa

This festival, held on the full moon, marks the beginning of Buddhist lent, a three month period where monks are required to stay within their vat to meditate and focus on dharma studies. Lao men are traditionally ordained as monks during this time.

September - Boun Khao Salak

Offerings including daily necessities such as books, pens, sugar and coffee are made to specific monks based on a lottery system. People also give beautiful wax flower candles to the monks to gain merit.

October - Boun Ork Pansa

Held on the full moon which marks the end of the rainy season, monks who were ordained for the three month lent period leave the vat and rejoin their families. During the evening of Van Ork Pansa, in a charming ceremony small banana-leaf boats called heua fai are launched on rivers with offerings of incense, candles and small amounts of money to bring luck and prosperity.



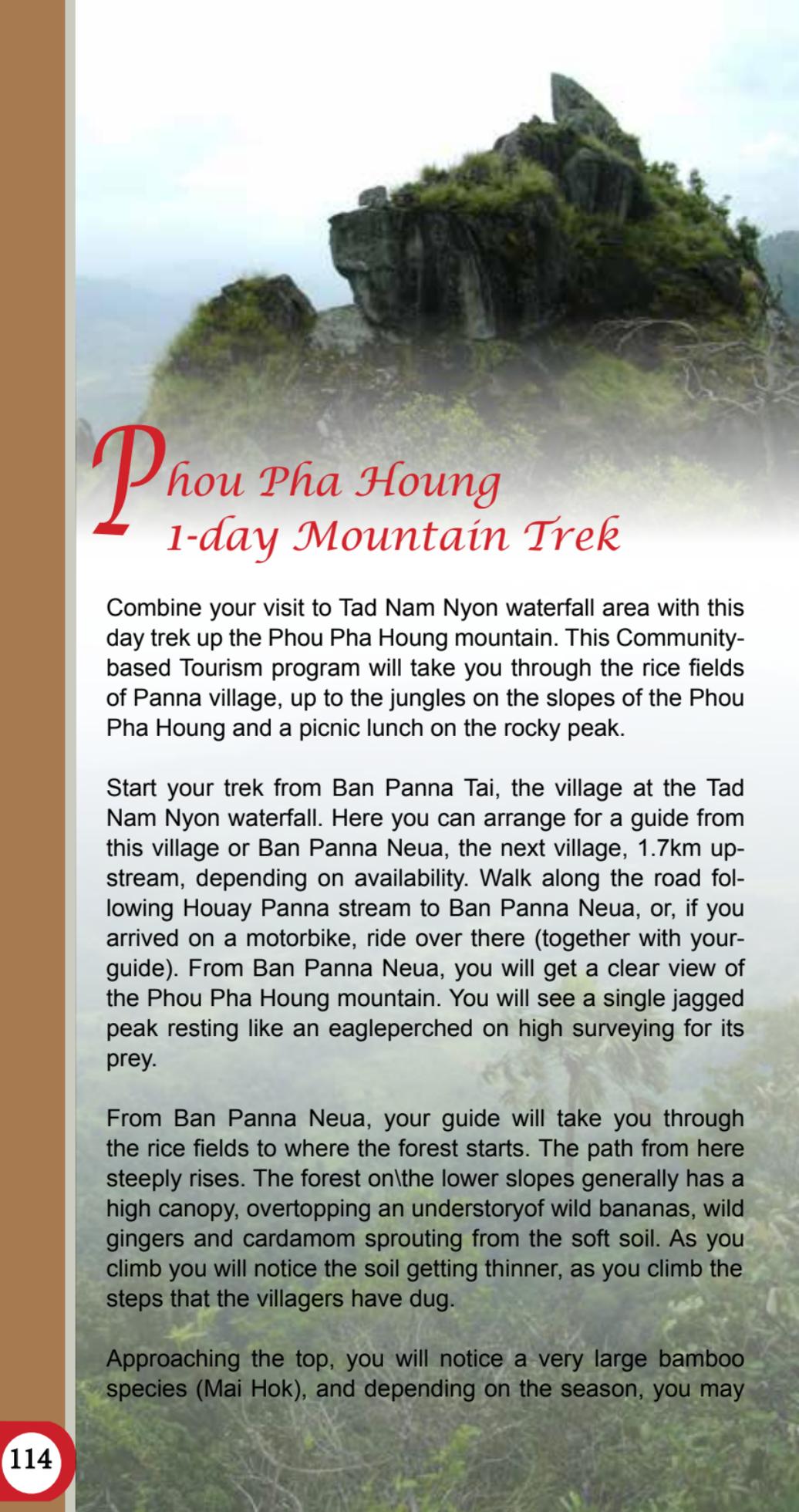
Rocket Festival



Wedding Ceremony



Pha Kham Stupa



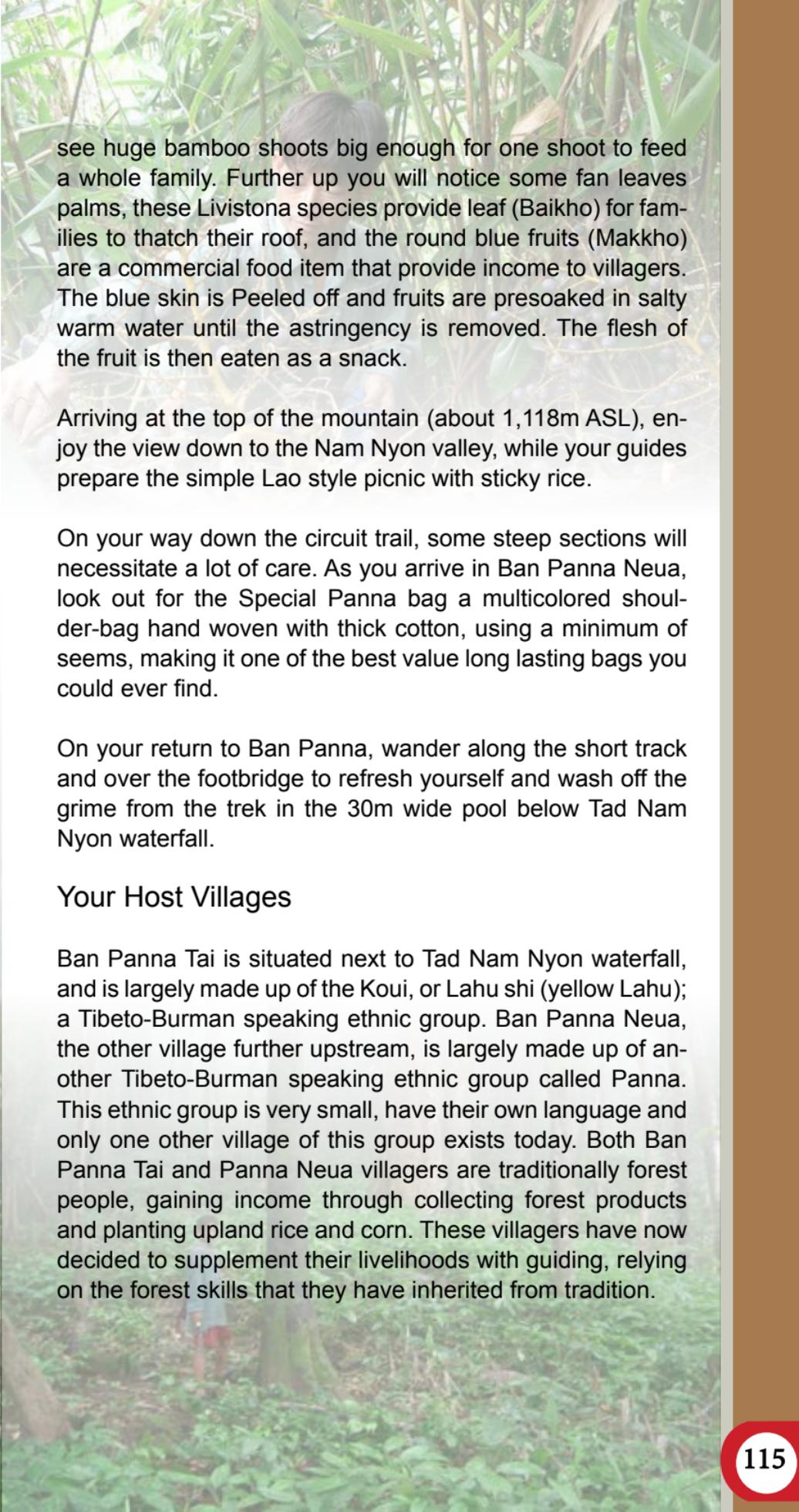
Phou Pha Houng 1-day Mountain Trek

Combine your visit to Tad Nam Nyon waterfall area with this day trek up the Phou Pha Houng mountain. This Community-based Tourism program will take you through the rice fields of Panna village, up to the jungles on the slopes of the Phou Pha Houng and a picnic lunch on the rocky peak.

Start your trek from Ban Panna Tai, the village at the Tad Nam Nyon waterfall. Here you can arrange for a guide from this village or Ban Panna Neua, the next village, 1.7km upstream, depending on availability. Walk along the road following Houay Panna stream to Ban Panna Neua, or, if you arrived on a motorbike, ride over there (together with your guide). From Ban Panna Neua, you will get a clear view of the Phou Pha Houng mountain. You will see a single jagged peak resting like an eagle perched on high surveying for its prey.

From Ban Panna Neua, your guide will take you through the rice fields to where the forest starts. The path from here steeply rises. The forest on the lower slopes generally has a high canopy, overtopping an understory of wild bananas, wild ginger and cardamom sprouting from the soft soil. As you climb you will notice the soil getting thinner, as you climb the steps that the villagers have dug.

Approaching the top, you will notice a very large bamboo species (Mai Hok), and depending on the season, you may

A person is standing in a dense bamboo forest. The bamboo stalks are tall and thin, with green leaves. The person is wearing a dark shirt and is looking towards the camera. The background is filled with bamboo, creating a lush green environment.

see huge bamboo shoots big enough for one shoot to feed a whole family. Further up you will notice some fan leaves palms, these *Livistona* species provide leaf (Baikho) for families to thatch their roof, and the round blue fruits (Makkho) are a commercial food item that provide income to villagers. The blue skin is Peeled off and fruits are presoaked in salty warm water until the astringency is removed. The flesh of the fruit is then eaten as a snack.

Arriving at the top of the mountain (about 1,118m ASL), enjoy the view down to the Nam Nyon valley, while your guides prepare the simple Lao style picnic with sticky rice.

On your way down the circuit trail, some steep sections will necessitate a lot of care. As you arrive in Ban Panna Neua, look out for the Special Panna bag a multicolored shoulder-bag hand woven with thick cotton, using a minimum of seems, making it one of the best value long lasting bags you could ever find.

On your return to Ban Panna, wander along the short track and over the footbridge to refresh yourself and wash off the grime from the trek in the 30m wide pool below Tad Nam Nyon waterfall.

Your Host Villages

Ban Panna Tai is situated next to Tad Nam Nyon waterfall, and is largely made up of the Kouli, or Lahu shi (yellow Lahu); a Tibeto-Burman speaking ethnic group. Ban Panna Neua, the other village further upstream, is largely made up of another Tibeto-Burman speaking ethnic group called Panna. This ethnic group is very small, have their own language and only one other village of this group exists today. Both Ban Panna Tai and Panna Neua villagers are traditionally forest people, gaining income through collecting forest products and planting upland rice and corn. These villagers have now decided to supplement their livelihoods with guiding, relying on the forest skills that they have inherited from tradition.



Seasonality

This circuit trek is operated between November and May, when there is low chance of rain. Please make a special enquiry at the Provincial Tourism Department in Houay Xay to check if it is operating outside of the above period.

Is This Tour Physically Demanding?

This trek has some steep climbs making it a higher grade of difficulty in some places. Villagers are continually improving the trail, but best to prepare for a moderately difficult climb. A total of 11 km is walked if you start in Ban Panna Tai. Starting in Ban Panna Neua reduces the trek to 7.5km.

Village Guides

Please note that the trek is facilitated by village guides, so please be aware that foreign language skills are limited, and non-verbal communication will be paramount. At least one guide from Ban Panna (Tai or Neua) must lead you the whole way.

Provincial Guides

English speaking guides can be arranged through the Provincial Guide Unit for those that book the trip from the Provincial Tourism Information Centre in Houay Xay.

Lunch

Lunch is included in the price. If you purchase the trek at Ban Panna Tai, the fare will be truly villager's field food. It is standard that the village guide's lunch is included as part of the price.

How to Book

If you are already at Tad Nam Nyon waterfall and decide to trek from there, it is possible to purchase a trek from Ban Panna Tai Village Guides Unit.

Bookings can also be made at least a day before the start of the trip at the Provincial Tourism Information Centre in Houei Xay. Here you can arrange a package program that includes transport, lunch, and English speaking Guide for a fully facilitated tour.

Getting There

Ban Panna Tai and Tad Nam Nyon waterfall are located about 27km from Houei Xay. If you want to travel there independently, proceed west along the Mekong road towards Meuang Don Pheung. Travel along that road, generally following the Mekong River upstream for about 18km. When you reach the Nam Nyon (Yone) bridge, cross and turn right at the Ban Nyon Mai market. Follow the signs up the Nam Nyon valley for about 9km before you reach Ban Panna Tai. Here you can follow the trail to the wonderful Tad Nam Nyon waterfall where you will be tempted to swim. However, you might prefer to save your swim until you get back from the Phou Pha Houng mountain trail.



Where to Stay

Gateway villa 1 Hotel

Houyxayneua Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856 84 212180

Gateway villa 2 Hotel

Houyxayneua Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856 84 212180

Houyxay Hotel

Houyxay Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856 84 211064

Keo oudomphone1 Hotel

Houyxaytai Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856 84 211504

Keo oudomphone 2 Hotel

Houyxayneua Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856 84 211308

Mekonglao Hotel

Houyxaytai, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856 84 211274

Senginkham Hotel

Houyxaytai Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856 84 211274

Thavisin Hotel

Houyxaytai, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856 84 211274

Achin Guesthouse

Moungkeo Village, Houayxay District,
Bokeo Province, Lao PDR.
Tel: +856-84 55783130

Alimith Guesthouse

Khonekeo Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856-84 22110404

Anousone Guesthouse

Pakthatai Village, Paktha District.
Tel: +856-84 211573

Bouaphaphone I Guesthouse

Houayxaineua Village, Houay xai District.
Tel: +856-84 211083

Bouaphaphone II Guesthouse

Khonekeo Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856-84 211906

Chaleunsap Guesthouse

Phiengngarm Village, Tonpheung District.
Tel: +856-84 55790055

Chaleunsin Guesthouse

Mom Village, Tonpheung District.
Tel: +856-84 55090351

Douangtavanphongchith Guesthouse

Tintha Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856-55884693

Daosavanphatana Guesthouse

Phonesavanh Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856-56649559

Houayxai Guesthouse

Houayxayneua Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856-84 211064

Hanghernsan Guesthouse

Mouangkeo Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856-84 212047

Khopchai Guesthouse

Houayxayneua Village, Houay xay District.
Tel: +856-55683164

Khamkong Guesthouse

Latkhoumnuang Village, Muang District.
Tel: +856-5130384

Keopaseuth Guesthouse

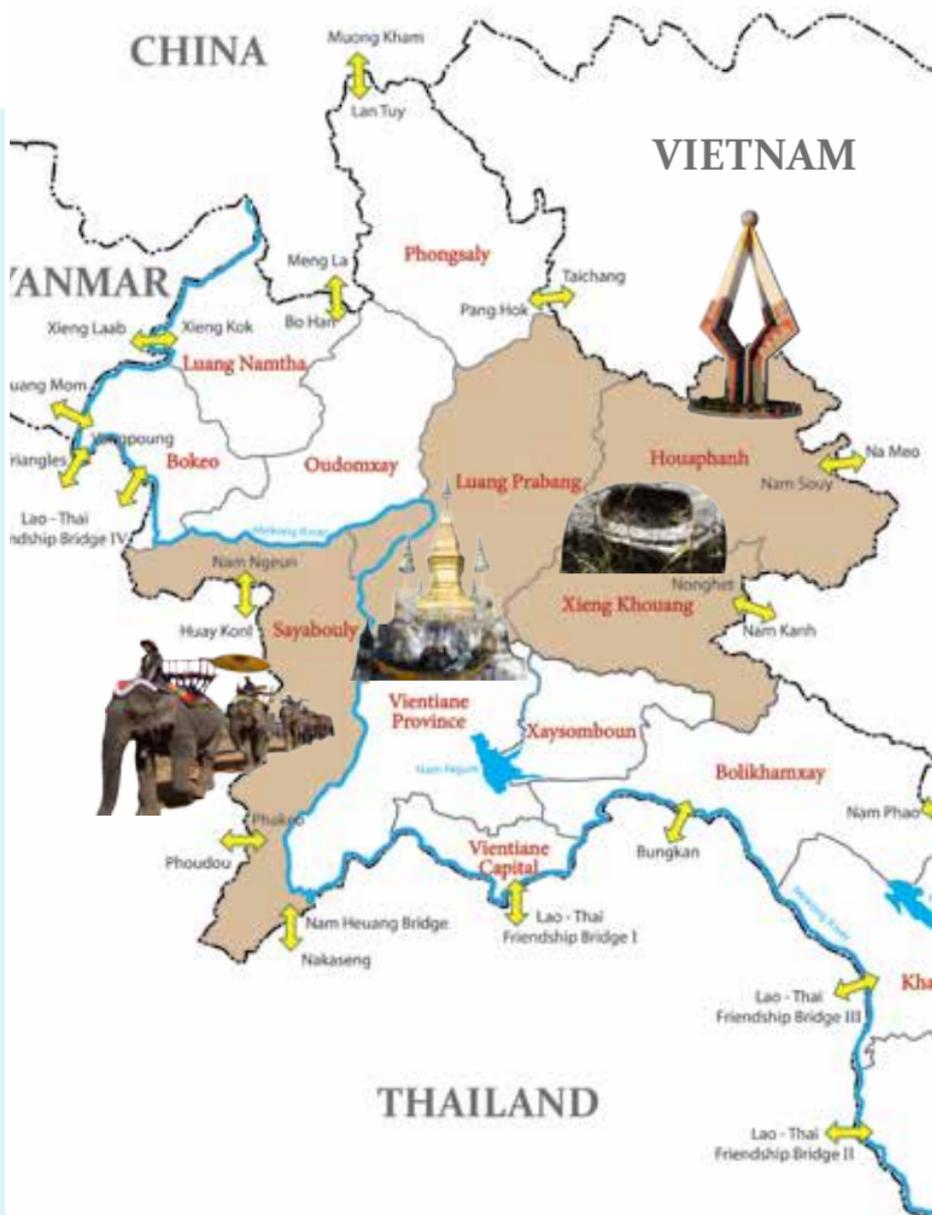
Tonphang Village, Tonphang District.
Tel: +856-55484345

Khamseum Guesthouse

Muangseum Village, Houay xay District.
Tel: +856-51451956

Mithaphap Guesthouse

Houayxaineua Village, Houayxay District.
Tel: +856-84 211219





Legend



Road



Route Indicator



Capital of Province



District



International Border Crossing



International Border



Provincial Border



Information Center



National Protected Area (NPA)

Sayabouly Province

- Location:** Nothwestern part of Laos
Total area : 16,389 square kilometers
Population: 374,666 (2010)
Districts: Sayabouly, Khop, Hongsa, Neun, XiengHone, Phiyng, Paklay, Kenethao, Botene and Thongmyxay
Capital: Sayabouly

Sayabouly Province is situated in the northwest of Laos, sharing borders with Vientiane Province and Luang Prabang Province in the east, and Thailand in the west. This mountainous province has several peaks with altitudes of more than 1.000 meters. Travel to this rugged landscape will reveal many beautiful mountains and flower gardens. The local people earn their living via agricultural products such as growing rice, cucumbers, cotton, cabbage, beans and sugarcane. Elephants continue to be used for loading and transporting heavy items.

The province is also an important agricultural producer of rice, cotton, peanuts, sesame, maize and oranges. The Malabri, one of the last remaining hunter-gatherer groups in Southeast Asia inhabit the forests in the province's western region. Other ethnic groups located in the province include the Khmu, Tai Dam, Tai Lue, Htin, Phai, Kri, and Akha. In Muang Ngeun District are ethnic Tai Lue villages, which still build traditional houses constructed with characteristic high-sloping roofs. Muang Ngeun's old Tai Lue style temples include Vat Ban Khon with its unique natural fiber murals and decorations, and Vat Salibun Nyeun with its charming view of the town.

Sayabouly has the largest number of elephants in Laos, which are commonly used to carry heavy items to and from fields and forest. In Hongsa District, elephant riding tours can be arranged and a visit to the Lao Elephant Conservation Center is a nice half-day trip. Also of interest in Hongsa is Vat Simungkhoun with its astonishing collection of Buddha images and the old city walls of an ancient settlement whose history is shrouded in mystery. In Sayabouly town, located on the banks of the Nam Houng River, and a beautiful backdrop of green fields and the Pha Xang Mountain range. are Vat Si Boun Heuang with its ancient foundations dating back to the 16th Century or perhaps earlier; Vat Si Phan Don with its unique diamond-shaped stupa and Vat Sisavang Vong. Between Vientiane Capital and Sayabouly town is Pak Lay, a small town located on the Mekong River banks with French colonial buildings, traditional Lao-style wooden houses.

The 1,912 km² Nam Poui National Protected Area has steep and rugged ridges composed mostly of Mesozoic sandstones and shales with summits along the Thai border that reach 1,790 meters. The NPA has a substantial wild elephant population, with an estimated 350 animals. Gibbon, gaur, tiger, dhole, serow, silvered langur, Asiatic black bear, and possibly even Sumatran rhinos are some of the other large animals found in the area. Don't miss the scenic waterfalls Nam Tok Na Kha, Nam Tok Ban Kum, and Tad Ham found in the southern part of the province

The art of Tai Lue weaving is still practiced in many Tai Lue villages throughout the province. Villages can be visited to learn about the production process and to purchase textiles. Many villages also work in cotton, organically grown in the province.



February

The Elephant Festival and Trade Fairs

Date: February (Trade Fairs)

Date: February (Elephant Festival)

Venue: Sayabouly District

As a living icon with important symbolic connotations and historical associations in Laos, the elephant is an animal dear to the hearts of the Lao people. The Elephant Festival is a Celebration of culture and traditional ties between Lao communities and Elephant, as well as drawing attention to the endangered status of this charismatic Species.

The Elephant Festival is a free, all-ages event with activities including a majestic elephant procession with up to 100 elephants, a traditional Elephant Baci ceremony, fruits and flowers offerings, monks' blessing, mahout and elephant Show, live performances from Lao and foreign artists, night markets and outdoors elephant museum-visitors will have the opportunity to see documentary films on a large outdoor screen and enjoy live performance on the main stage or go for an elephant ride in the neighboring forest.

In 2007, the first Sayabouly Elephant Festival took place, hosted by the people of Ban Viengkeo. The festival is organised annually, taking place mid-February, and is rotated around three districts of Sayabouly Province.





Hand-spun, Hand-woven, Cotton Handicrafts

The beautifully textiles crafted by the Tai Lue people of Ban Viengkeo, display many aspects of Lue culture and tradition. One prominent element is the elephant.



Elephants have played, and still do, an important role for the people of Viengkeo, and the village's elephant Keeper descent from a long lineage of mahout.

Tai Lue weavers are famed for their cotton farming and



cotton weaving skills. The weavers in Ban Viengkeo are known around the country as master cotton spinners. Working with natural ingredients such as indigo to make shades of blue and green, insect wax (khang) to make red, the women dye their



cotton yarns in preparation for weaving. The looms used are the traditional looms of the Tai Lue: two-pedal floor standing looms with a supplementary heddle that is used to create motifs and patterns. Hand crafted weaving equipment such as shuttles and beaters are made by the women's husbands often featuring decorative carving that Tai Lue men are also well known for.

The finished items are made into elephant souvenirs, scarves, shawls, skirts, blankets and tablecloths. Traditional patterns and cloths inspire new designs whilst old traditional pieces are created for ceremonies and Festivals in the village.

To
Hongsa District Capital



Sugge

Bar
Ho

To
Ngeun
District



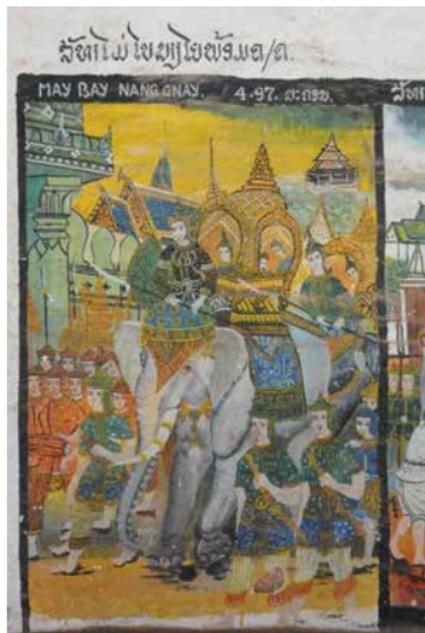
Visiting Ban Viengkeo

The village is 5 km from Hongsa District Town. Situated in the heart of the village is a handicraft demonstration and sales center. Take the opportunity to wander through the narrow lanes of the village and view some of the most skilled weavers in Sayabouly weaving underneath there houses. Buy their intricate weavings hot off the loom at fair prices. When the water level is high elephants bathe in the river. Elephant riding tours can be booked back in Hongsa town at the Mahout Association.



Best Village Walk

Ban Viengkeo
Hongsa District





Houay Namsai Medicinal Plant Preserve and Herbal Spa

Ban Houay Kaeng

Up to 100 traditional medicinal plants are located within the village protected area of 35 ha, covered by lush green forest on mountainous hillsides, where the Nam Houng River meanders through the valley and is met by the clear-blue waters of the Namsai stream gushing from the foot of the cliffs. In this charming setting the villagers operate a resort-like herbal spa.

Get in touch with the healing powers of Lao nature and uplift your spirits by relaxing in the Lao herbal steam room with traditional herbs, ending in a refreshing dip in the crystal clear and cool waters of the Namsai stream, said to have strengthening powers. Top this off with a traditional massage at the riverside pavilion.

The Medicinal Plant Preserve and Herbal Spa is community owned, and run by a group of villagers from the nearby Ban Houay Kaeng village and is unique throughout Laos.



Medicinal Gardens and Nature Reserve

Walking tracks weave through this natural forest preserve with named examples of plants. To learn more about remedies and the healing powers of plants, book a guided tour upon arrival. The village guides will explain the uses of these plants and the locally held beliefs about this forest. The guides can also take you up the steep slopes to explore the nearby Tham Phi Yaa, and Tham Mor Yaa caves.

Herbal Steam-rooms

For full relaxation and experience of the healing powers of Asian medicine enjoy a *homyaa steam* room. Here traditional herbs from this area including lemon grass, camphor and basil are used. The steam therapy involves placing fresh and dried aromatic plants into boiling water and relaxing in the resulting steam piped from the pot, into the wooden rooms. Inhale and exhale steadily to maximize the absorption of the essential oils while the vapours surround your body.



When you register for the herbal steam room, make sure you enquire about towel supply, and safe keeping of your belongings.

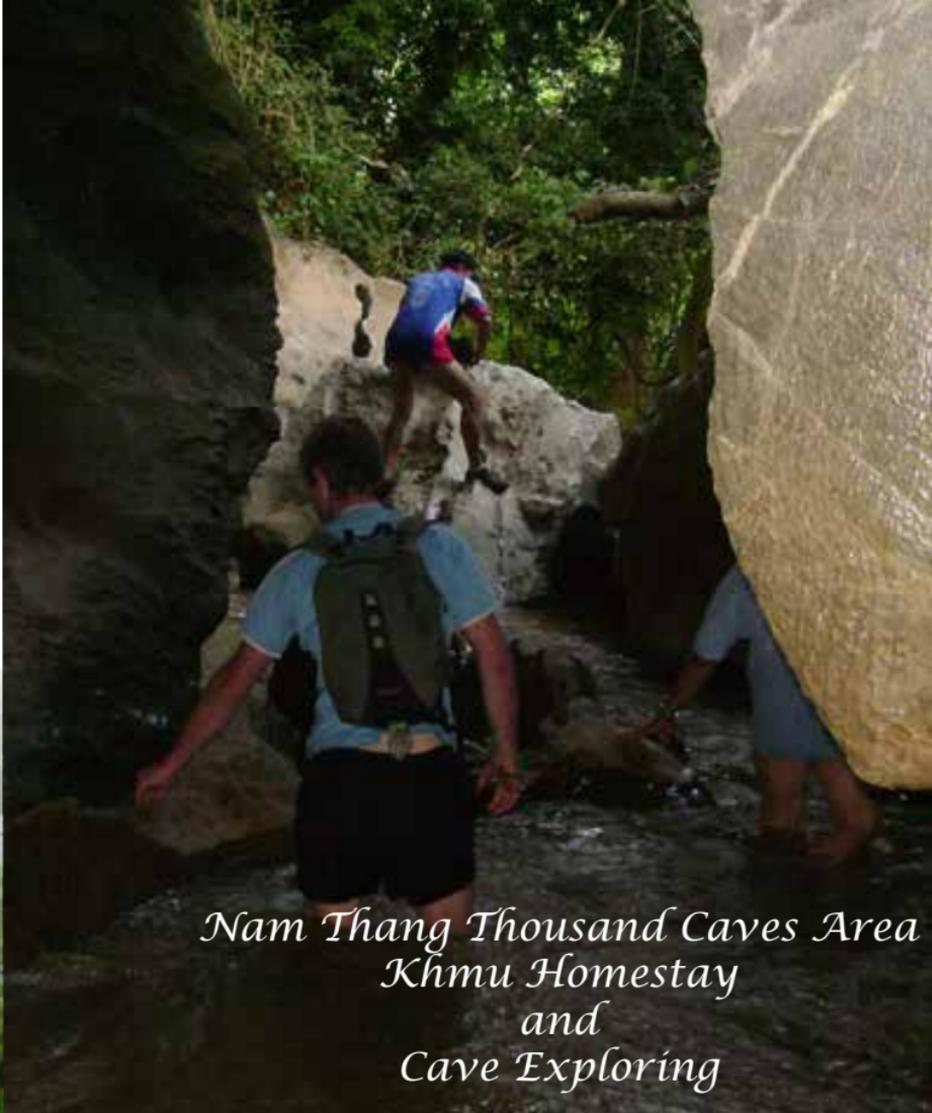
Traditional Massage

A traditional Lao massage while listening to the whispering sounds of the Nam Houng River is recommended. Book your trained masseurs from Ban Houay Kaeng village ahead at the Provincial Tourism Department in Sayabouly Town.

Dining

Dining facilities are available at the centre. Please enquire about cooking service at the Provincial Tourism Department in Sayabouly Town.





*Nam Thang Thousand Caves Area
Khmu Homestay
and
Cave Exploring*

Nam Thang 1000 Caves Area

Nam Thang 1000 Caves Area is a limestone karst landscape where cave-pocked cliffs surround the Khmu villages of Ban Nathang, and Ban Keo. Here the Nam Thang stream has cut right through the mountains, and winds its way, to the NamPoui river. The traveller has a chance to explore the area's chasms and caves while getting an insight into Lao life with a homestay option in Ban Keo Village. This area, about 43 km south of Sayabouly Town can be accessed by the adventurous, along a mountain road.

Cave Trekking Trails

From Ban Keo village, village guides provide a number of cave exploring options:



Program 1:

Tham Loup and Tham Chia Khiu Cave Circuit

This is a guided trail starting from Ban Keo (homestay village). The village guide will lead you about 1 km to the mouth of Tham Loup cave. Tham Loup is an elevated cave on a limestone ridge.

A short but steep climb through the forested slopes brings you to a sink-hole entrance of about 7 m high and 14 m wide. A steep descent into a wide gallery gives the cave its name; “loup” meaning a downward entrance into the earth. This wide gallery proceeds horizontally with a flat sandy floor for about 130 m. The ceiling is then met by a boulder-strewn slope, leading to a slot, where you exit to an isolated valley in the jungle surrounded by cliffs.

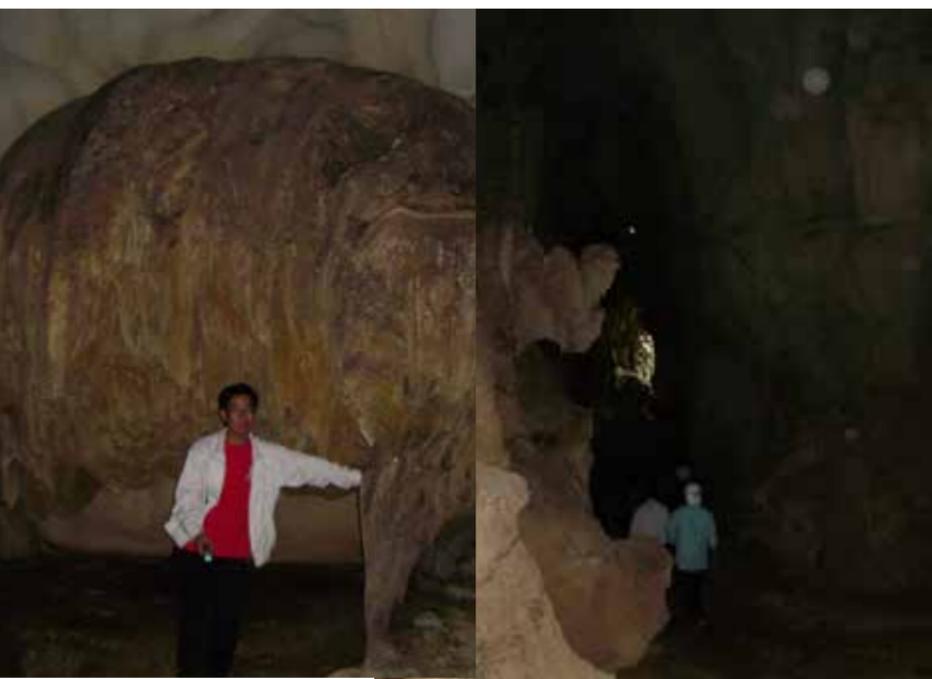
A short walk across the valley to a small entrance at the base of another slope brings you to the “backdoor” of Tham Chia Khiu cave. Those entering may be reminded of how the cave was named from the faint but pungent aroma of bat guano (bat droppings), the villagers favorite fertilizer, and also the source of gun-powder for villagers’ muskets in the past (Chia-khiu- smell of bats).

This cave, in spite of its name, is clean and pleasant. A wide passage passes a calcite formation that looks like a large elephant - perhaps a talisman for the province’s emblem.

A slight descent brings you to the large mouth of the cave, but before you go out, explore another passage. Here a cliff-drop is traversed through a hatch, and natural staircase surrounded by what looks like a bulkhead with portholes, reminiscent to the interior of a ship. Travel further along a lower level passage, passing many calcite decorations to a window in the cliff. Here, check the view through the upper forest canopy, overlooking the road to Ban Keo. From here, turn back to exit Tham Chia Khiu at “mouth” of the cave and walk back to the road to return to Ban Keo.

Is this program physically demanding?

This trek, a total of about 3 km, offers the challenge of passing through two caves, using not only the large “mouth” entrances, but also narrow slit exits to make it a circuit. Both Tham Loup and Tham Chia Khiu caves have large chambers with fairly flat floors. Some sections require crossing of boulders, and briefly squeezing through a small chamber. Generally this tour is graded 5/10 for difficulty. However, as always utmost caution is required inside caves.



Program 2 : Tham Nam Lot tunnel-Cave Exploration

Nam Thang stream cuts a 1-km tunnel right through the mountain, known as Tham Nam Lot. An extended trip through Tham Nam Lot is only for the most adventurous people willing to totally immerse in the water, and clasp onto slippery vertical walls without an escape out of the tunnel for the whole 1 km length between the sinkhole-entrance to the resurgence. This cave is a lower level of both Tham Loup, and Tham Chia Khiu caves, but is not known to connect to those caves. The cave starts just over 1 km from Ban Keo, and ends, quite close to the village.

Is this caving program physically demanding?

This tunnel-cave is rated as difficult, and should never be attempted in the wet season, as water will be too high and fills the cavity in some places, without a way back against the flow. It is vital to take the advice of local guides, and never enter the cave without guides.

Program 3: Tham Pha Keo Cave Visit

Another cave, Tham Pha Keo, is situated on the cliffs above Ban Keo, and located very close to the phenomenon that gave the village its name. Pha Keo, meaning cliff of crystal refers to a belief that the glow from a giant crystal, shoots a ray across the valley (over the village) to a cliff on the other side of the Pou river valley on auspicious occasions.

Is this cave visit physically demanding?

This cave is a close walk from Ban Keo village, however, the steep climb to get to its mouth makes the cave of moderate difficulty rating.

For any other cave trips discuss with your village hosts.



Seasonality

The thousand cave area is best visited between November and May, during the dry season. Please make a special enquiry at the Provincial Tourism Office if you would like to go outside of these months.

Provincial Guides

English speaking guides from Sayabouly can be arranged through the Provincial Tourism Department Information Centre for an additional fee.

Village Guides

Strictly for visiting caves, a local guide from the village guide associations must be arranged when you arrive at 1000 CavesArea. Guides are happy to respond to any questions about the local culture and environment. Although the local guides have excellent bush skills, and know their way around the caves, please be aware that village guides will have very limited foreign language skills, so non-verbal communication or translation by your provincial guide will be paramount.

Homestay

Your Ban Keo homestay is in normal village houses, with rollout mattresses and mosquito nets for sleeping, as well as basic squat toilet, and bucket bath.

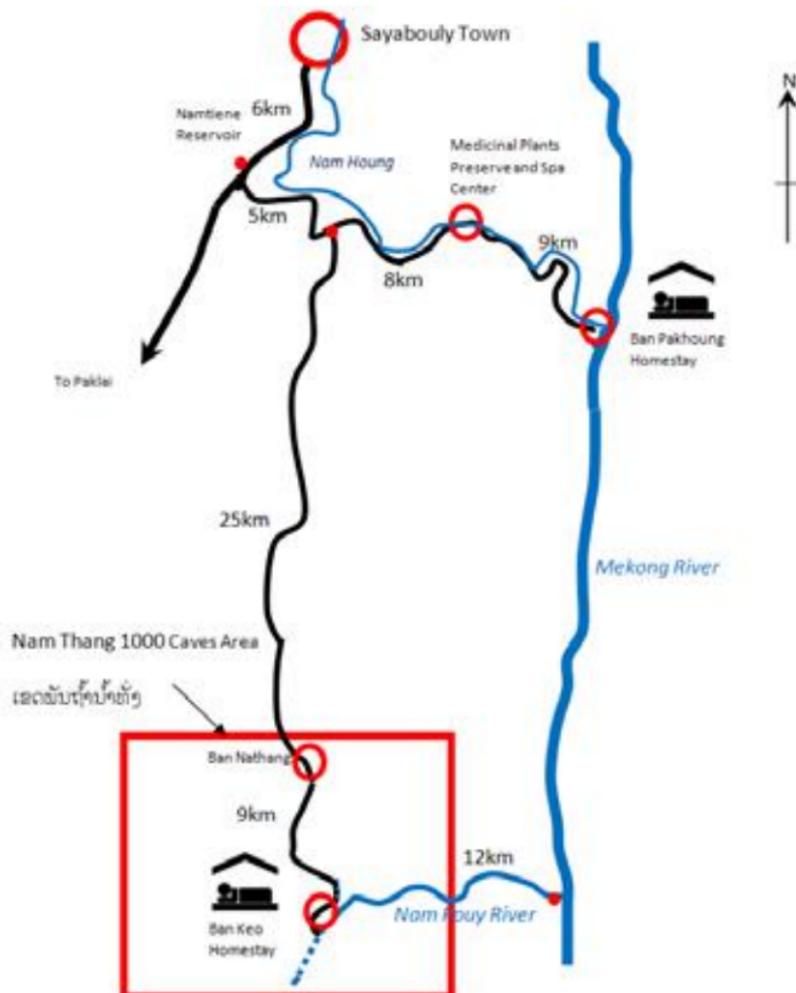
Look for the Homestay dual language signage when you arrive at Ban Keo. Another option is to telephone the Provincial Tourism Department at the number shown at the back to help you with arrangements.

How to Get There

From Sayabouly Town, take the Paklai road south. Turn left at about 6 km where you see the directional sign to both Nam Thang 1000 Caves Area. Carry on down that road for about 5 km. Once you've passed Ban Nasam turn right and proceed along the mountain road south for about 25 km until you arrive at Ban Nathang, the gateway to the 1000 caves area. Ban Keo is another 9 km south of Ban Nathang.

Other Tours that Include the 1000 Caves Area

For a larger circuit that includes road transport to Ban Keo and boating along one of the most remote sections of the Mekong, as well as taking in other Community-managed attractions such as the Houay Nam Sai herbal massage centre and medicinal plant preserve, please enquire about the Pha Xang Circuit tour, or check other programs on www.sayaboulytourism.com website.





Your Homestay Host Villages

Ban Pakhoung is the village at the confluence of Nam Houng river and the Mekong. This village of more than 450 people offers pleasant riverside homestay, and boating transit port on this surprisingly uninhabited section of the Mekong.

Ban Houay Kaeng

Is your host village for the Houay Namsai Medicinal Plant Preserve and Spa Centre. This village of 81 families of mainly Hmong ethnicity (61 Hmong highlanders, 17 Khmu mid-landers, 3 Lao Loum lowlanders) run the Centre as a Community-based initiative. Here the principles of service groups, revenue distribution, and maintenance, and management funds, as well as village development microfinance are all used to make a sustainable Community-based income-generating activity that helps conserve nature, culture, and provide an alternative livelihood to villagers.



Ban Keo



Ban Keo village is located about 9 km from Ban Nathang. This ethnic Khmu village of about 64 houses looking over the Nam Poui river and is at the end of the road, but is the hub of most of the 1000 Caves Area's activities. Villagers here have organized their own homestay service, and caving guide association. These service groups have arranged their own pricing and revenue distribution as a form of Community-based tourism. They welcome you to enjoy their hospitality.



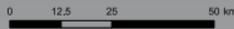


Ban Nathang

Ban Nathang is the village at the entrance of the “Nam Thang 1000 Caves Area”. This village of about 640 people offers a rest stop as you enter the 1000 Caves area. This village is also the custodian of many caves. One, called Tham Khoun Houay, is accessed halfway along the 9 km road from Ban Nathang to Ban Keo. An 800m walk along an old road that leads you part of the way to the cave takes you through a remarkable forest where all the plants seem to have giant leaves.

Some of the taro-like Phouk (*Alocasia macrorrhiza*) have astoundingly large elephant ear leaves, causing one to wonder why the leaves are like this seemingly just in this small valley.





For detailed information please take a look at the Guidebook of Sayabouly. For guided tours and transportation service please contact:

Provincial Tourism Department Sayabouly

Phone: (+856-30) 518-0095

Email: Sayaboury_ptd@tourismlaos.org

District Tourism Office Hongsa

Mr. Sisouphan, phone: (+856) 020 5577-8142

District Tourism Office Ngeun

Mr. Khamdee, phone: (+856) 020 5519-0586

District Tourism Office Xienghone

Mr. Bounmy, phone: (+856) 020 5597-7310

District Tourism Office Khop

Mr. Say, phone: (+856) 020 5597-8470



OUDOMXAI



LUANG PRABANG

THAILAND

VIENTIANE PROVINCE



LEGEND

Northern Heritage Route

THAILAND

CAMBODIA

Where to Stay

Alounseer Hotel

Donemai Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel : +856 -74 213136

Nokinsi Hotel

Simuang Village, Xayabouly District.
Tel : +856 -74 211017

Saianan Hotel

Simuang Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel : +856 -74 211116

Xangkham Hotel

Namngern Village, Ngern District.
Tel : +856 -74 214047

Auengdoy Resort

Chomphet Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-74 211831

Bouachan Guesthouse

Houayaom Village, Phieng District.
Tel: +856-20 55029833

Bankeng Guesthouse

Keng Village, Sayboully District.
Tel: +856-74 211210

Bounmani Guesthouse

Phaphoun Village, Sayboully District.
Tel: +856-20 55180056

Bounma Guesthouse

Phana Village, Sayboully District.
Tel: +856-20 56514247

Banyen Guesthouse

Phabong Village, Khop District.
Tel: + 856-20 53753333

Bounvong Guesthouse

Simongkhoun Village,
Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-74 211529

Bannasavanh Guesthouse

Keng Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-20 22366899

Chanpaseuth Guesthouse

Phiangarm Village, Ngern District.
Tel: +856-20 22367258

Chambo Guesthouse

Phonexay Village, Hongsa District.
Tel: +856-20 56856488

Chiengsavang Guesthouse

Namphoun Village, Paklay District.
Tel: +856-20 99879922

Chalernsab Guesthouse

Chomkeo Village, Kaenthao District.
Tel: +856-74 2142272

Chanthavong Guesthouse

Nasavang Village, Paklay District.
Tel: +856-20 22432105

Doungchan Guesthouse

Sisavang Village, Paklay District.
Tel: +856-20 55979737

Daosavanh Guesthouse

Ngarmngern Village, Ngern District.
Tel: + 856-74 214036

Duangmala Guesthouse

Ngarmngern Village, Ngern District.
Tel: +856-030 9480001

Deuanpen Guesthouse

Phiangarm Village, Ngern District.
Tel: +856-20 22366921

Daochan Guesthouse

Phonesavanh Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-030 5180450

Dorkkhoun Guesthouse

Thana Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-030 5259461

Dorkkhoun Guesthouse

Sengchaleun Village, Phieng District.
Tel: +856-20 58111159

Douangchaiphet Guesthouse

Houaysaykham Village, Paklay District.
Tel: +856-20 55778333

Douangchanh Guesthouse

Sisavang Village, Paklay District.
Tel: +856-20 22432128

Hungthong Resort

Thana Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel : +856-20 55979999

Houmphun Guesthouse

Mai Village, Sienghone District.
Tel: + 856-20 56262363

Hongsavadee Guesthouse

Phonesart Village, Hongs District.
Tel: +856-20 55477848

Hongkham Guesthouse

Simuang Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-74 211381

Jouxayhoua Guesthouse

Phonesart Village, Hongs District.
Tel: +856-20 59793105

Jenny Guesthouse

Nasavang Village, Paklay District.
Tel: +856-2 22367082

Kito Guesthouse

Phabong Village, Khop District.
Tel: + 856-74 710023

Khantaphone Guesthouse

Nator Village, Saybouly District.
Tel: +856-20 56930630

Khounmani Guesthouse

Simuang Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-20 55677769

Khamphonh Guesthouse

Nasavang Village, Paklay District.
Tel: +856-20 22975559

Khaikham Guesthouse

Simongkhoun Village,
Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-74 211410

Khonekhat Guesthouse

Nasavang Village, Paklay District.
Tel: +856-20 99870440

Lattana Guesthouse

Somsavang Village, Phieng District.
Tel: +856-20 55779960

Mekey Guesthouse

Simongkhoun Village,
Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-74213105

Mokthida Guesthouse

Nayao Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-20 22366229

Mixoke Guesthouse

Longpor Village,
Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-20 55018881

Mongvang Guesthouse

Nampui Village, Phieng District, Say-
abouly Province, Lao PDR.
Tel: +856-20 55877256

Minta Guesthouse

Chomphet Village, Kaenthao District.
Tel: +856-30 9461809

Moungkhoun Guesthouse

Thana Village, Xayabouly District.
Tel: +856-74 213143

Numping Resort

Namsong Village, Paklay District.
Tel: +856-20 22504740

Noknoy Guesthouse

Simuang Village, Xayabouly District.
Tel: +856-20 22366236

Numvanh Guesthouse

Nasavang Village, Paklay District.
Tel: +856-30 9470555

Phosay Resort

Namngeun Village, Ngeun District.
Tel: +856- 20 22142826

Pabong Guesthouse

Phabong Village, Khop District.
Tel: +856-20 55484776

Peter Guesthouse

Phiengngarm Village, Ngeun District.
Tel: +856-20 97163666

Phonesavang Guesthouse

Phonesavanh Village,
Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-20 77772793

Phetkhampheng Guesthouse

Simuang Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-74 211475

Phonepadid Guesthouse

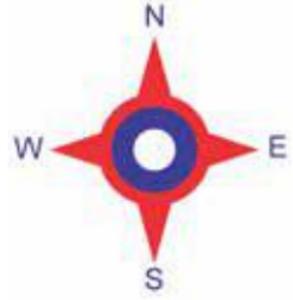
Nonesavanh Village,
Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-20 55677043

Poudmengkon Guesthouse

Nonesavanh Village,
Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856-20 55477555

Phetsamai Guesthouse

Simuang Village, Sayabouly District.
Tel: +856 20 99802918



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|----------------------|
|  | Road |  | International Border |
|  | Route Indicator |  | Provincial Border |
|  | Capital of Province |  | Information Center |
|  | District | | |

General Information

Luang Prabang Province

Location: Luang Prabang is situated in the centre of northern Laos, bordering the provinces of Oudomxay, Phongsaly and Houaphanh to the north, Vientiane and Sayabouly to the South and southwest and Xieng Khouang to the east.

Total area: 16,875 square kilometers.

Population: 447,541 (2010).

Districts: Luang Prabang, Xieng Ngeun, Nan, Pak Ou, Nambak, Ngoi, Pakxeng, Phonxay, Chomphet, Viengkham and Phounkhone.

Capital: Luang Prabang.

Population: Luang Prabang Province has a total population of just over 400,000 that includes 12 Distinct ethnic groups. The Khmu are the largest ethnic group in the province and make up the majority (about 44%) of the provincial population. They are a Mon-Khmer speaking people known for their knowledge of the forest, and they are believed to be the original inhabitants of Laos. Lowland Lao comprise 39% of the population and live mostly in lowland valleys and Luang Prabang Town. The Hmong are the third most populous ethnic group (16%).

History



Archaeological evidence suggests that Luang Prabang has been inhabited since at least 8,000 BC. The first Lao kingdom, Lane Xang, was founded here in the 14th century by King Fa Ngum after he conquered and unified the lands of modern-day Xieng Khouang, the Khorat Plateau and Luang Prabang. The city was first referred to as Muang Swa and by 1357 the name was changed to Muang Xieng Dong Xieng Thong by local inhabitants. Shortly thereafter, King Fa Ngum accepted a golden Buddha image called the Pha Bang as a gift from the Khmer monarchy and the thriving city-state became known as Luang Prabang. Luang Prabang was the capital of Lane Xang until moved to Vientiane in 1545 by King Seta Setthathirath (although Luang Prabang remained the country's main religious centre). The city's first contact with western emissaries occurred in the mid 17th century during the reign of King Surigna Vongsa. After his death in 1694, Lane Xang broke up into three separate Kingdoms; Vientiane, Champasack and Luang Prabang.

By the late 19th Century Luang Prabang was under attack by marauding Black Flag bandits who destroyed many sacred Buddha images, temples and historical documents. Under King Sisavang Vong (1904-1959)

a number of restoration and beautification projects were launched, many of which are still evident today. French influenced buildings began to appear in the turn of the 20th century adding to the mixture of Lao, Tai-Lue, Burmese, Chinese and Tai architecture.

Luang Prabang is rich in cultural heritage, and is known as the seat of Lao culture, with monasteries, monuments traditional costumes and surrounded by many types of nature's beauty.

In 1995 UNESCO declared Luang Prabang a World Heritage Site. This distinction confirms, through the concerted action of local, national and international authorities, a real motivation to preserve this wonderfully serene city. The title is justified not only by the many beautiful temples in Luang Prabang, but also by its traditional wooden dwelling, the old colonial style houses and the natural environment that encases it in a perfect harmony of plant and stone.





Where to Visit

Tad Kuang Si Waterfall

This impressive waterfall is located about 30 kilometers south of Luang Prabang. You can take a tuk-tuk from the center of the city or rent your own transport. Several villages inhabited by people from various ethnic groups can be visited along the way to the waterfall.

The scenery on the way to Tad Kuang Si is beautiful featuring fresh air, flowers and wild animals.





Tad Sae Waterfall

This waterfall is accessible by car, tuk-tuk, bicycle but during the rainy season can be reach by boat only. It is divided into three limestone steps and is twenty minutes by car from Luang Prabang. It is perfect for picnicking, swimming and relaxing.





Tham Ting Cave

Situated on the Mekong River, just a short distance from Luang Prabang, Sacred Tham Ting Cave houses where there are thousands of Buddha statues. This underground sanctuary has been venerated for centuries. The number of Buddha images in the cave gradually increases as locals bring Buddhas to place in the cave when they visit. The cave can be reached either by boat trip to the point where the Nam Ou River meets the Mekong or by road to Ban Shang Hai village, where you can also witness the villagers making 'Lao Lao' (fermented rice liquor). Visitors can sample the drink and purchase locally made handicrafts.



Nong Khiaw & Muang Ngoi Kao

Nong Khiaw is a small district capital bisected by the Nam Ou River north of Luang Prabang, famous for its dramatic limestone cliffs and lush vegetation. From Nong Khiaw take a boat one hour upriver to Muang Ngoi Kao, where you can get a taste of traditional Lao village life and relax in riverside bungalows.



Vat Xieng Thong Temple

Built during the 16th Century by King Saya Setthathirath and completed in 1560, Vat Xieng Thong temple is one of the most interesting examples of traditional Lao art and Buddhist architecture. The ornate carved and gilded funeral vehicle of the former king is kept in one of the buildings in the temple grounds. It is well worth visiting and paying your respects to this temple while in Luang Prabang. This temple was used to organize the highest Royal Ceremonies and houses the bones of King Sisavangvong. The intricate golden facades, colorful murals, glass mosaics and unique three-tiered roof make this one of the most beautiful temples in Asia.





National Museum

The National Museum, constructed in 1904 as the Royal Palace, is laid out in a cruciform shape and accessed from a side entrance. Various royal objects are displayed in the large entrance hall. Many gifts from foreign envoys (including a rock brought back from the moon) and religious and culture artifacts are also on display including the Phabang (Buddha image), the gold standing 14th century Buddha image from which Luang Prabang derives its name. The museum is open from 8:00 am to 11:30 am and 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm every day except Tuesday.





Phousi Mountain

Phousi Mountain is located in the centre of Town. Visitors will need to climb 328 steps to the top of the mountain from where they will be able to get a perfect 360 panoramic view of the whole city. Mount Phousi is Luang Prabang's holy mountain, and at its very top sits the 20 m high Vat Chomsi Stupa



Markets



Night Market

Open from 5 until 10 pm, the atmospheric night market is set up on the main road between the post office and the museum, selling a large variety of local textiles and ethnic handicrafts : There is also a small street with lots of food stalls serving inexpensive local fare located besides the Tourism Information Centre.





Phosi Market



The largest market in Luang Prabang, the newly constructed Talat Phosi has lots of fresh produce, meat, household goods and clothing. It is located on the road to Kuangsi Waterfall and can be reached in about 5 minutes by bicycle or tuk-tuk.





Dara Market

Located in the Centre of Town, near the Public Health Department and the former Luang Prabang Hospital which now is a high-end hotel, this market offers a variety of products such as clothing, jewelry and traditional silk ('Sinh') Lao skirts.

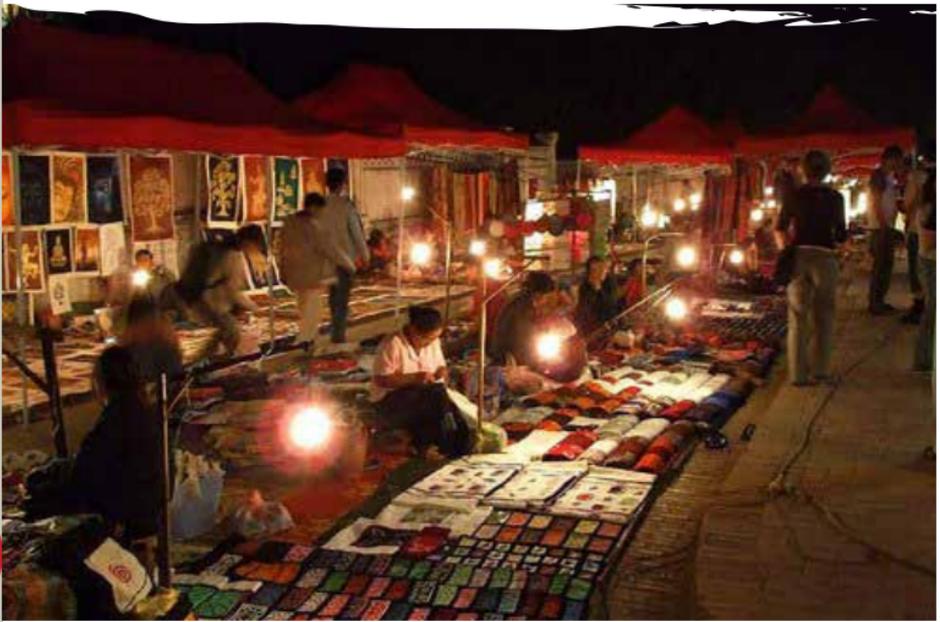




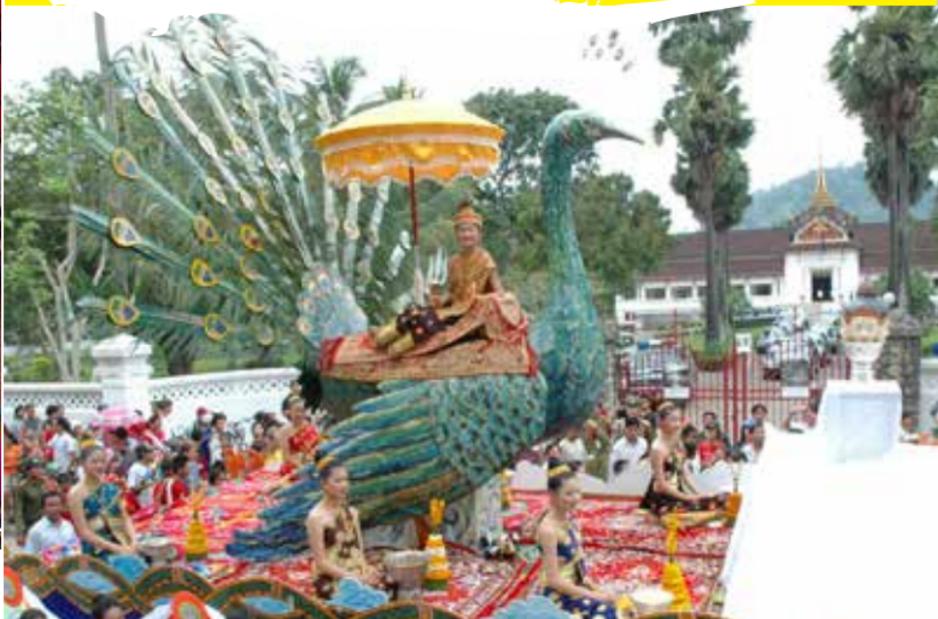
Handicraft Market



On the corner across from the Phousi Hotel and the Post Office, the handicraft market is open during the day (the vendors then move to the night market after 5pm) and is filled with ethnic handicrafts made mostly by the Hmong.



Events and Festivals



Pi Mai Lao (Lao New Year)

Though officially only a 3 day Festival, every April, Pi Mai Lao is celebrated with style in Luang Prabang. The events and activities last a full week here. There is a trade fair at the old stadium, open markets on the main street, a “Miss Lao New Year” contest and various parades. Buddha images are taken out of the temples to be cleaned with fragrant water by the faithful, *Baci* (a traditional blessing ceremony) are held in people’s homes, and symbolic sand stupas are built for good luck. The revered Pha Bang - the Buddha from which Luang Prabang derives its name - is displayed and worshipped at Vat Mai. Pi Mai, however, is best known as a cheerful water festival - everyone throws water on one another so be prepared to get soaked!

Boun Bang Fai (Rocket Festival)



Boun Bang Fai is a rain-making and fertility festival that takes place just before the rainy season, usually during May. The rockets fertilize the clouds and bring rain which in turn feed the rivers and fertilize the fields. The rocket festival is one of the most enjoyable and entertaining of them all with colorful processions through the towns and villages.

Boun Khao Pansa (Buddhist Lent)



This is the beginning of Buddhist Lent. Following Van Kao Pansa, for three months Buddhist monks spend most of their time in prayer and meditation and are restricted from spending the night in other temples. In the morning of Khao Pansa, the devoted wake early to “tak bat” (give alms to the monks) at the many temples in town. This festival is held during the eighth full moon of lunar calendar.

Tak Bat (Giving Alms)



While in Luang Prabang, you may observe the morning alms giving ceremony where monks walk through town in single file carrying their alms bowls to give laypeople the opportunity to offer alms and gain merit. Offerings by the people are usually comprised of sticky rice, fruit or simple traditional snacks. Known as Binthabhat in Lao, this is a sacred religious ceremony. Tourists may participate and photograph the ceremony, however, the people of Luang Prabang, especially the monks, ask that this is done in a respectful way and visitors do everything they can not to disrupt this ancient tradition.



Boun Khao Padabđinh (Boat Racing Festival)

Boun Khao Padabđinh is held in August or September, depending on the lunar calendar. In the morning, locals visit temples to make offerings to ancestors and perform “merit-making”. In the afternoon, there is boat racing on the Nam Khan River. The riverbanks are crowded and there is much revelry.



Boun Lay Hua Fai (end of Buddhist Lent)

This festival, held in October/November celebrates the end of Buddhist Lent. In the evening, candlelit processions travel through town, and banana-leaf boats filled with colorful incense, flowers, and candles are set adrift on the Mekong.



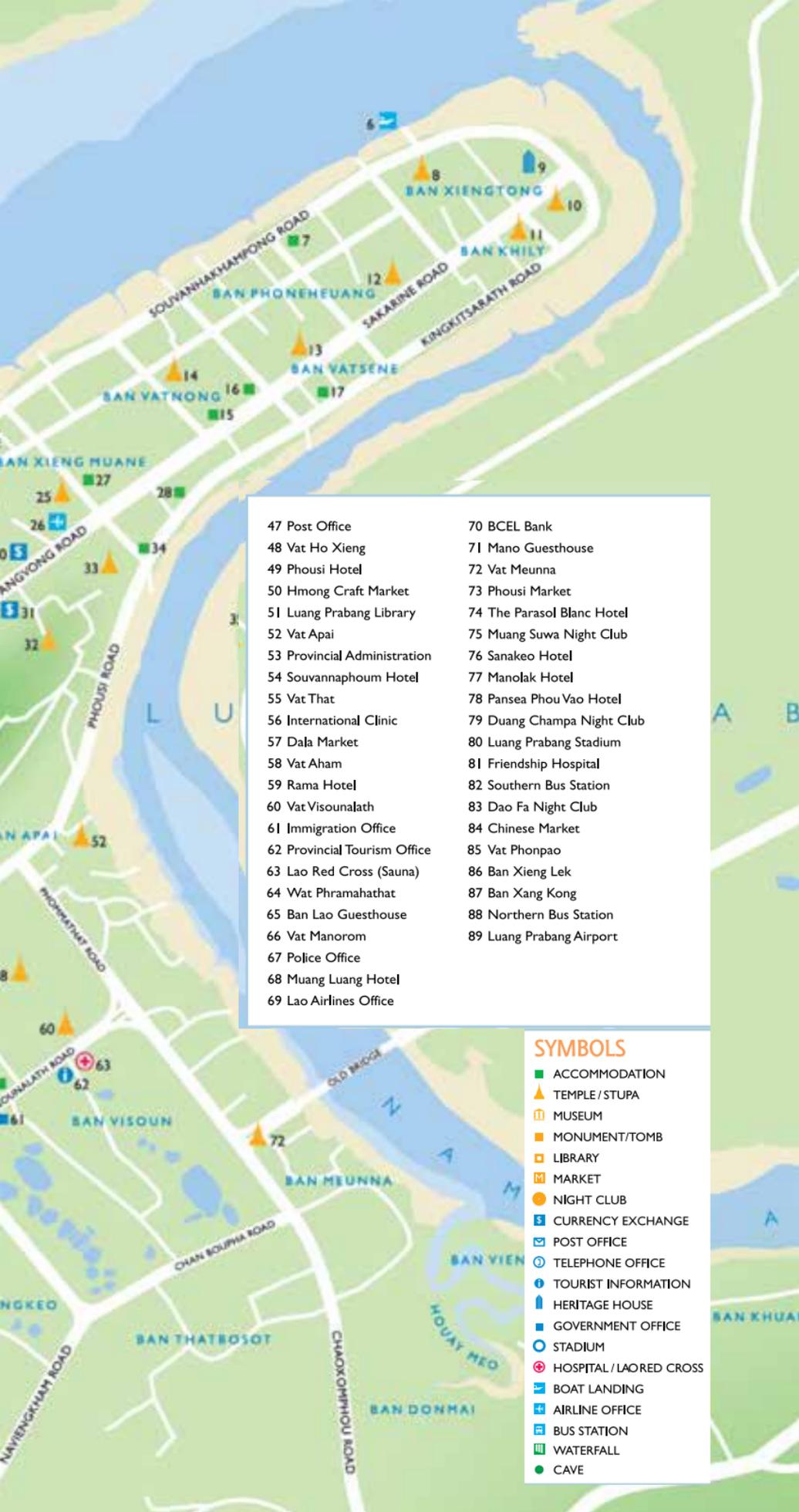
Boun Kin Chiang

In December the province’s various ethnic minorities, most notably the Hmong, celebrate the past years harvest and new lunar new year with weeklong festivals that feature music, dancing and special foods. This is an excellent time to see traditional dress, festive textiles, silver jewelry and traditional musical instruments.

INDEX OF PLACES

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Vat Tam Xieng Mene | 24 Vat Xieng Mouane |
| 2 Vat Long Koun | 25 Vat Phapai |
| 3 Vat Chomphet | 26 Bangkok Airways Office |
| 4 Vat Xieng Mene | 27 Phapai Guesthouse |
| 5 Xieng Mene Boat Landing | 28 Phatoumphone Guesthouse |
| 6 Xieng Thong Boat Landing | 29 National Museum |
| 7 Calao Guesthouse | 30 BCEL Bank |
| 8 Vat Xieng Thong | 31 Lao Development Bank |
| 9 Heritage House | 32 Vat Tam Phousi |
| 10 Vat Phak Khan | 33 Vat Siphouttabath |
| 11 Vat Khili | 34 Sai Nam Khan Guesthouse |
| 12 Vat Si Boun Hueang | 35 Vat Phanluang |
| 13 Vat Sene | 36 Ho Xieng Guesthouse |
| 14 Vat Nong | 37 Vat Phone Xai |
| 15 Villa Santi Hotel | 38 Evening Food Market |
| 16 The 3 Nagas Guesthouse | 39 Luang Prabang Mai Hotel |
| 17 Apsara Guesthouse | 40 Lao Development Bank |
| 18 Slowboat Landing | 41 Vat Mai |
| 19 Chom Khong Guesthouse | 42 Ethnic Craft Night Market |
| 20 Xieng Mouane Guesthouse | 43 Vat Pha Huak |
| 21 Sayo Guesthouse | 44 Information & Culture Office |
| 22 Sala Prabang Guesthouse | 45 That Chomsi |
| 23 Vat Choum Khong | 46 Ta Noy Guesthouse |





- 47 Post Office
- 48 Vat Ho Xieng
- 49 Phousi Hotel
- 50 Hmong Craft Market
- 51 Luang Prabang Library
- 52 Vat Apai
- 53 Provincial Administration
- 54 Souvannaphoum Hotel
- 55 Vat That
- 56 International Clinic
- 57 Dala Market
- 58 Vat Aham
- 59 Rama Hotel
- 60 Vat Visounalath
- 61 Immigration Office
- 62 Provincial Tourism Office
- 63 Lao Red Cross (Sauna)
- 64 Wat Phramahathat
- 65 Ban Lao Guesthouse
- 66 Vat Manorom
- 67 Police Office
- 68 Muang Luang Hotel
- 69 Lao Airlines Office
- 70 BCEL Bank
- 71 Mano Guesthouse
- 72 Vat Meunna
- 73 Phousi Market
- 74 The Parasol Blanc Hotel
- 75 Muang Suwa Night Club
- 76 Sanakeo Hotel
- 77 Manolak Hotel
- 78 Pansea Phou Vao Hotel
- 79 Duang Champa Night Club
- 80 Luang Prabang Stadium
- 81 Friendship Hospital
- 82 Southern Bus Station
- 83 Dao Fa Night Club
- 84 Chinese Market
- 85 Vat Phonpao
- 86 Ban Xieng Lek
- 87 Ban Xang Kong
- 88 Northern Bus Station
- 89 Luang Prabang Airport

SYMBOLS

- ACCOMMODATION
- ▲ TEMPLE / STUPA
- 🏛️ MUSEUM
- 🏆 MONUMENT/TOMB
- 📖 LIBRARY
- 🏪 MARKET
- 🌃 NIGHT CLUB
- 🏦 CURRENCY EXCHANGE
- 📧 POST OFFICE
- ☎️ TELEPHONE OFFICE
- 🗺️ TOURIST INFORMATION
- 🏠 HERITAGE HOUSE
- 🏛️ GOVERNMENT OFFICE
- 🏟️ STADIUM
- 🏥 HOSPITAL / LAORED CROSS
- 🚢 BOAT LANDING
- ✈️ AIRLINE OFFICE
- 🚌 BUS STATION
- 🌊 WATERFALL
- CAVE

Where to Stay

Maison Souvannaphoum Hotel



No. of Room : 25
Room Rate : USD 132 - 348
Address: Rue Chao Fa Ngum
Thatluang Village, PO.Box 741
Luang Prabang, Lao PDR
Tel: +856 71 254 609
Fax: +856 71 212 577
E-mail: maison@angsana.com
www.angsana.com

Santi Resort & SPA



No. of Room : 67
Room Rate : USD 80 - 100
Address: Nadeuy Road
Nedeuy Village, P.O Box 681
Luang Prabang, Lao PDR.
Tel: + 856- 71 253 470, 253 472
Fax:+ 856- 71 253 471
E-mail: info@villasantihotel.com
reservations@villasantihotel.com
www. Villasantihotel.com

Aucient Luang Prabang Hotel



No. of Room : 12
Room Rate : USD 60 - 75
Address: Sisavangvong Road, Pakham vil-
lage, Luang Prabang Province, Lao PDR
PO Box: 774
Tel: + 856-71 260 807
+ 856-71 212 264
Fax: + 856-71 212 804
E-mail: inffo@ancientluangprabang.com
marketing@ancientluangprabang.com

Manoluck Hotel



No. of Room : 45
Room Rate : USD 40 – 265
Address: Phouvao Rod
121/3 Phongkham Village,
Luang Prabang, Lao PDR.
Tel : + 856-71 212 250
+ 856-71 212 509
Fax: + 856-71 212 508
E-mail : booking@manoluckhotel.com

Mekhong Riverview Hotel

No. of Room : 24
Room Rate : USD 90 - 195
Address: Mekong Riverside Road,
Xieng Thong Village, PO Box 183
Luang Prabang, Lao PDR.
Tel: + 856 - 71 254 900
+ 856 - 71 254 910
Fax: + 856 - 71 254 890
E-mail: hotel@mekhongriverview.com
www.mekhongriverview.com



Muang Thong Hotel

No. of Room : 34
Room Rate : USD 75 - 85
Address: Mekong Riverside Road,
Xieng Thong Village, PO Box 183
Luang Prabang, Laos PDR
Tel: + 856 - 71 254 900
+ 856 - 71 254 910
Fax: + 856 - 71 254 890
E-mail: hotel@mekhongriverview.com
www.mekhongriverview.com



The Chang Heritage Hotel

No. of Room : 22
Room Rate :
Address: 93/3 Phonehuang Village,
Luang Prabang, Laos PDR
Tel: + 856 - 71 255 031
Fax: + 856 - 71 255 031
E-mail: info@the-chang.com
reservation_changheritage@the-chang.com



Phousi Guesthouse

No. of Room : 19
Room Rate : USD 25 - 40
Address: Choumkong Village
Luang Prabang District, Lao PDR.
Toll: + 856-71 212 973
+ 856 - 20 5577 1888
Fax: + 856-71 212 973
E-mail: info@phousiguesthouse.com
www.phousiguesthouse



Keopathoum Guesthouse



No. of Room : 30
Room Rate : USD 20 - 40
Address: Phou vao Rod
Phon Pheng Village, Luang Prabang
District, Lao PDR.
Tel: + 856 71 212 978
+ 856 20 5567 3900
Fax: + 856 71 212 978
E-mail: keopathoum@yahoo.com

New Phouvao Guesthouse



No. of Room : 22
Room Rate : USD 19 - 25
Address: Phouvao Road
Naviengkham Village, 114/10
Tel: + 856 - 20 5568 1113
+ 856 - 71 253 332
Fax: + 856 - 71 254 589
E-mail: newphouvaogh@yahoo.com

Pangkham Lodge



No. of Room : 11
Room Rate : USD 22,5 - 37,5
Address: Phothisarath Road
Thatluang Village, 06/01
Tel: + 856 - 20 5567 1162
+ 856 - 030 9239 933
+ 856 - 71 253 177
Fax: + 856 - 71 253 177
E-mail: pangkham@laotel.com
pangkhamlodge@gmail.com
www.agoda.com

Villa Laodeum



No. of Room : 8
Room Rate : USD 23 -- 35
Address: Ounheuan Road, P.O.Box 1007
Choumkhong Village,
Luang Prabang District, Lao PDR
Tel: + 856 - 71 255 777
Fax: + 856 - 71 252 974
E-mail: information@villalaodeum.com

Riverside Guesthouse

No. of Room : 11

Room Rate : USD 20 - 40

Address: Khili Luang Prabang Village,
Luang Prabang District, Lao PDR.

Tel: + 856 - 71 212 664

+ 856 - 20 9999 5994

+ 856 - 20 5404 1212

Email: riversideguesthouse@yahoo.com

www.guesthouse-riverside.com

www.luangprabanghotel.com



Amantaka Hotel

Thongchaleun Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71 860333

Ancient Luangprabang 2 Hotel

Phoneheung Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71 260804

Arrissara Hotel

Mano Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71 260576

Ban Lao Hotel

Mano Village,
Luangprabang District.
Tel:+856-71 252078

Boualuang Hotel

Viengxai Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71 213085

Chanthawin Resort

Charn Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel: +856-20 55557155

Daoneua Hotel

Nasamphan Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+8 56-71 260988

Daraboua Hotel

Thatluang Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71 253914

Daraphet Hotel

Hoxieng Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71254881

Dlyonht Hotel

Viengmai Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71 260620

Dokbarn Hotel

Pongkham Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel: +856-71 252992

Haisoke Hotel

Phabathtai Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71 212278

Jouliana Resort

Xiengkeo Village,
Luang Prabang District.,
Tel:+856-71 260417

KhuanChang Resort

Phanom Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel: +856-20 55571571

La Residence Hotel

Naviengkham Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71 212530

Le Bel Air Boutique Resort

Meuangnga Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel: +856-20 55557119

Lotus Hotel

VaththongVillage,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71 255050

Luangprabang Paradise Resort

Meungnga Village,
Luang Prabang District.
Tel:+856-71 213103



Legend



Road



Route Indicator



Capital of Province



District



International Border Crossing



International Border



Provincial Border



Information Center

Xieng Khouang Province

- Location:** Northeastern Laos
- Total area:** 15,880 square kilometers
- Population:** 269,887 (2010)
- Districts:** Paek, Kham, Nonghet, Khoun, Morkmay, Phoukood, Phaxay and Thathom
- Capital:** Phonsavanh

Located 400 km northeast of Vientiane capital city, Xieng Khouang province has a population of 249,000 spread over an approximate area of 15,000 sq. km. It is one of the 17 provinces of Lao PDR, located in the north-central area of the country, on the mountainous Tran-ninh plateau. Xieng Khouang includes eight Districts: Paek, Phaxay, Phoukood, Kham, Nonghet, Khoun, Thathom and Mokmay.

It is set at an altitude of more than 1,000 metres above sea level and enjoys mild temperatures for most of the year, although winters can be surprisingly cold. Kham District is a low-laying basin set at around 600 m above sea level.

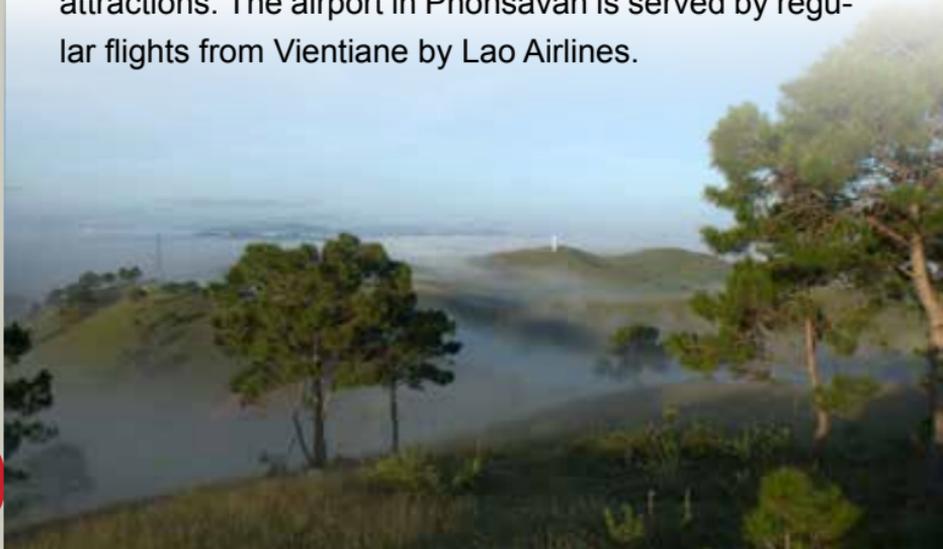
Xieng Khouang enjoys a remarkable geographical location, surrounded by mountain ranges, with Phu Bia (2700 m) the highest peak in Lao PDR. The province sits at the crossroads of traffic from central Vietnam and northeast Thailand. Historically, these two powerful neighbours – Siam and Vietnam – have vied for control of its soil.

The province shares borders with Houaphan, Luang Prabang, Vientiane and Bolikhamxay Provinces, as well as an international border with Vietnam's Nghe An province. Xieng Khouang has a long and rich history and is home to numerous ethnic groups, including Tai Phuan, Hmong, Khmu and Tai Dam.

Xieng Khouang is home to the Plain of Jars, the prehistoric stone megaliths which attract thousands of tourists to the province each year. The Lao government is currently finalising an application for the World Heritage Committee to consider listing the Plain of Jars as a World Heritage Site.

Until briefly after World War II, the French used Xieng Khouang Town, present-day Muang Khoun Town, as their provincial capital. A few ruinous colonial public buildings remain to this day, such as the governor's residence, church and French school.

Phonsavan, the new provincial capital, is located in Paek District and caters to increasing numbers of national and international tourists, eager to experience Xieng Khouang's natural, historical and archaeological attractions. The airport in Phonsavan is served by regular flights from Vientiane by Lao Airlines.



Xieng Khouang History

Xieng Khouang and the enigmatic Plain of Jars make up one of the most important sites for studying the late prehistory of mainland Southeast Asia. While the ancient civilization that constructed the jars was flourishing, advances in agricultural production, the manufacturing of metals, and the organization of long-distance overland trade between India and China were also rapidly transforming local society and setting the stage for urbanization across the region. Mortuary practices associated with the jars consisting of both cremation and secondary burial suggest a highly-evolved local tradition of ritual, symbolism and metaphysics which persisted through to the kingdoms of the Angkor Period, long after the arrival of Hindu and Buddhist philosophies into Southeast Asia.

Prehistoric material found at the Plain of Jars is still under study, and apparently spans a considerable period of time, with some dating from as early as 2000 BC. The bulk of the archaeological material, however, as well as the jars themselves appeared much later, dating to the early Iron Age between 500 BC and 500-800 AD. The closest archaeological parallels to the finds at the Plain of Jars appear to be Bronze and Iron Age materials from Dong Son in VietNam, Samrong Sen in Cambodia, and the Khorat Plateau in northeast Thailand. There are also similarities with the present-day city of Danang, as well as with sites in the North Cachar Hills of northeastern India where megalithic jar North exist. All of these similar sites date to approximately the same period-roughly 500 BC - 500 AD. Together they form a mosaic picture of a large area of upland Southeast Asia criss-crossed by traders, with the Xieng Khouang Plateau at its centre.

Although little is known about the people that constructed the megalithic stone jars, an account of the area's history as it relates to the Tai Puan and the lands they settled in Xieng Khouang is recorded in the Phong

sawadan Meuang Puan or the Muang Puan Chronicles. The Tai Puan are a Buddhist Tai-Lao ethnic group that migrated from what is today southern China and by the 13th century had formed an independent principality at the Plain of Jars that prospered from the overland trade in metals and forest products. In the mid-14th century, Muang Puan was incorporated into the Lane Xang Kingdom under Fa Ngum, though the Phuan were able to retain a high degree of autonomy. After Siam (Thailand) extended control to Lao territories east of the Mekong in the 1770's, Muang Puan became a Siamese vassal state and also maintained tributary relations with Dai Viet (Viet Nam). To exert greater control of the lands and people of Muang Phuan, the Siamese launched three separate campaigns (1777-1779, 1834-1836, 1875-1876) to resettle large parts of the Phuan Population to the south to regions under firm Siamese Control.

Subsequent invasions by Chinese marauders called "Haw" plundered Luang Prabang and Xieng Khouang, and the Franco-Siamese treaties of the 1890's placed Xieng Khouang under colonial rule as part of French Indochina until briefly after World War II.

During the Second Indochina War that raged in Laos during the 1960's and early 1970's Xieng Khouang suffered heavy aerial bombardment and intense ground battles due to its strategic importance. This conflict has left a deadly legacy of unexploded ordnance (UXO) which is still being cleared today. Since Laos gained full independence in 1975, Xieng Khouang and the Plain of Jars are enjoying peace and tranquility after centuries of conflict. The original capital city, Muang Khoun, was almost totally obliterated by US bombing and consequently, the capital was moved to nearby Phonsavanh. Of several Muang Khoun Buddhist temples built between the 16th and 19th century, only ruins remain. Vat Pia Vat, however, survived the bombing and can be Visited.

Where to Visit



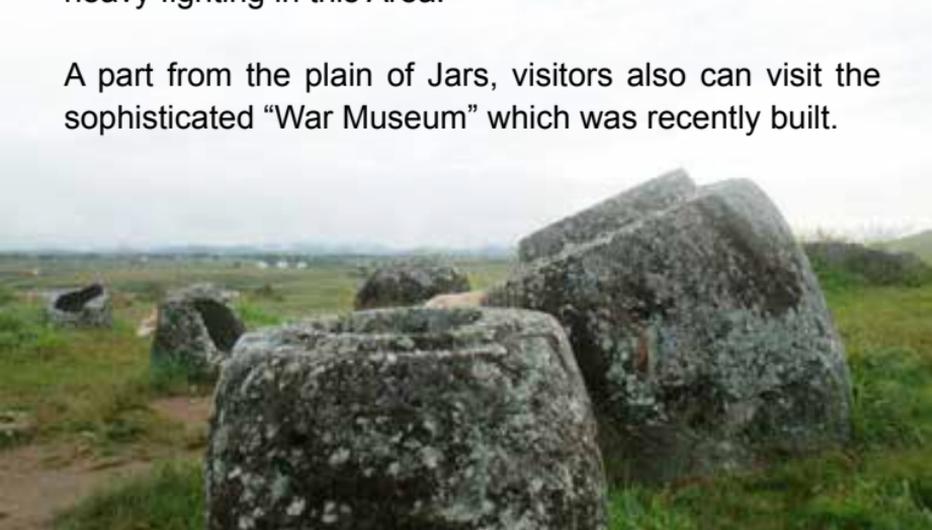
Jar Site 1

Jar Site 1 or *Thong Hai Hin* is the most popular site, located 8 km southwest of Phonsavan and can be easily reached by tuk tuk or bike. Follow Rt 10 southwards, turn right at the sign in Ban Na-O and drive for another 2 kilometers; alternatively book a package tour at any of the local tour companies. The site counts 331 jars, including the largest single jar - said to have been the victory cup of the King Khoun Chueang.

According to local legend the Lao King Khoun Chueang (AD 6th Century) fought a long battle against his enemy and liberated the local people from the oppressive ruler. The jars were carved to brew and store huge amounts of (Lao Whisky) which were drunk in the 7 month lasting celebration held in honour of his victory.

Jar Site 1 was of military strategic importance during the Second Indochina War. Trenches and foxholes, anti-aircraft positions and a tank scrape can be found on the two raised areas and on top of the cave. Several bomb craters and damaged or displaced jars are a testimony to heavy fighting in this Area.

A part from the plain of Jars, visitors also can visit the sophisticated "War Museum" which was recently built.



Jar Site 2



Jar Site 2 or Hai Hin Phu Salato is located about 20 km southwest of Phonsavan. The site contains 93 jars spread across two adjacent hills.

From the parking area, walk up the stairs on your left to the first group. A small plundered stupa can be visited further east on the hill.

The date of the stupa is unknown. The road which bisects the adjacent hills was constructed by the French in the colonial period.

On the hill to the west a stone disc with an animal relief, possibly a frog can be found. Bomb craters surround the site and several of the stone jars show the impact of ground battles.





Jar Site 3

Jar Site 3 or Hai Hin Lat Khai is made up of 8 groups and is located around the village of Ban Xieng Di, around 10 km further south of Site 2.

The main group with some 150 jars is situated on top of a scenic hill which offers great views of the surrounding plain and rice paddies.

To get to the main groups cross the bridge after paying the entrance fee and continue along the rice field dykes to the lower foothill of the mountain, where a marked path picks up the trail to the site.

The village has a small Buddhist Temple near the entrance booth where visitors are welcome.

The small restaurant near the ticket booth serves drinks and noodle soup and is run by a local family.

A portion of the restaurant profit goes to the Village Fund which benefits the entire Community.

The travel agencies in town offer tours to Jar site 2 and 3 often combined with a visit of Muang Khoun.





Phou Kheng



Phu Kheng jar quarry site is located 15 km northwest of Phonesavan Town, accessible by a 7 km rough road starting from a paved at Ladngon village. Based on a story told by elderly, during 1351 BC, Khuan Chuang rules Mouang Phakun or Mouang Phuan and started to spread its governance power to other areas. Wherever he and his men won a battle, they always celebrated. Thus Khuan Chuang ordered his subordinates to come PhuKheng to make Jars as rice whisky storages. Phu Kheng was chosen for such creation because it had plenty of big rocks. A jar was carved using a tool made from metal. The jar was then tested if it could hold water without any leakage. If water leakage from the jar. That particular jar would be then discarded at the site where it was made. however, based on examination carried out using an advanced technological tool to measure a texture and scratches on the jar left from carving, it is estimated that the jar is aged from 2.500 to-3.000 years old. This is still an enigmatic Answer.





In 1960s, during the war against America and its Lao Counterpart, Phu Kheng became a battle field providing a strategic army base for Lao People fighting to regain the Plain of Jars. Phukheng was dug in to make a big hold from its pinnacle linking with a 100 meter-long tunnel. An observation tower was built for monitoring and guarding the place. Inside the Tunnel, there were bed rooms and a storage room for weapons and other-war related tool.

The site is the largest recorded quarry site (approximately 20 ha) and is the source for site 1's Jars. The quarry process can be followed through various stages at Phu kheng

Unfortunately, the area was heavy bombed during the war and the site has not yet been cleared of UXO, limiting the investigation. The unfinished or rock source for the jars can be found on the steep hills of the mountain. Jars are also located on the lower, gentler slopes leading to the main quarry area; it is possible that these jars were being transported to site one but were abandoned for unknown reasons.





Tham Xang Cave

Limestone peaks covered with forests form the beautiful landscapes around the Tham Xang cave areas. Hidden in these rocks is a network of three caves which was used by the Pathet Lao movement as shelter during the second Indochina War. Inside the cave complex they set up a hospital, an arsenal and a drug depot. Evidence can still be seen. Beside its war history the residential cave is worth visiting to see its gorgeous cave features.

Different dripstone features, called speleothems, can be seen inside. The most familiar formations are stalactites-hanging downwards. And stalagmite – growing upwards. Sometime the drip water will flow down the walls and over the cave floor creating flowstone or rim stone deposits that form around pool of water like rice terraces. In some areas damage caused by humans, such as broken speleothems, which cannot be put back together, and graffiti at the walls, can be seen. (The Hmong community of Ban Ta takes care of the caves and offers a local tour guide service).





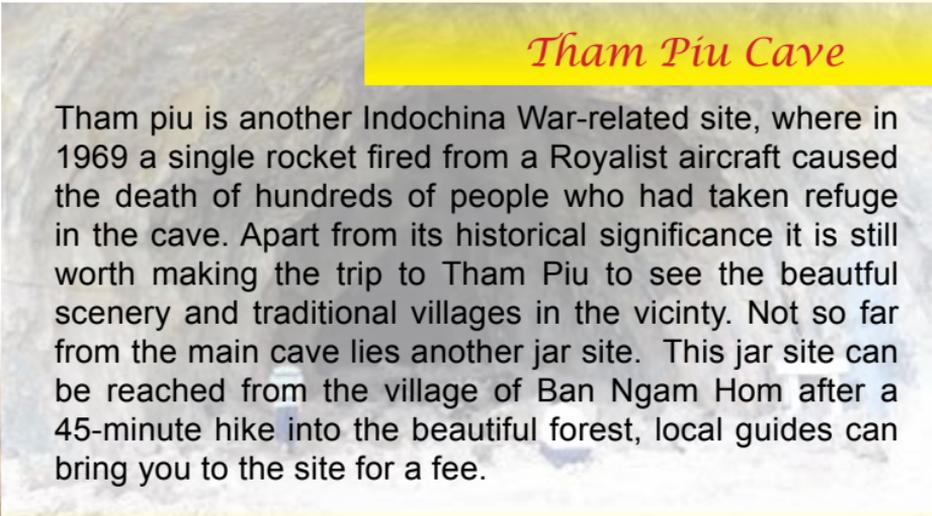
Hot Springs

Two hot mineral springs can be visited near Muang Kham on the way to Houaphan. Baw Nyai is the large of the two and lies 18km from Muang Kham, 52km from Phonsavan. It has been developed as a resort with bungalows and bathing facilities. The spring source is in a heavily wooded area where several bamboo pipes have been set up so that you can bathe nearby.

Tourists also can visit hot springs at Ban Xang Village where now there are facilities such as bath pool, spa, traditional massage, a community lodge and restaurant.

Baw Noi (Little Spring)

Feeds into a stream just a few hundred meters off Route No. 7, a couple of kilometers before Baw Nyai on the way from Muang Kham. At the entrance to the stream where locals peddle their weaving and other locally made handicrafts, a few heavily eroded stone jars can be visited.



Tham Piu Cave

Tham piu is another Indochina War-related site, where in 1969 a single rocket fired from a Royalist aircraft caused the death of hundreds of people who had taken refuge in the cave. Apart from its historical significance it is still worth making the trip to Tham Piu to see the beautiful scenery and traditional villages in the vicinity. Not so far from the main cave lies another jar site. This jar site can be reached from the village of Ban Ngam Hom after a 45-minute hike into the beautiful forest, local guides can bring you to the site for a fee.

Community Lodge at Ban Pha Keo Village

Visitors can enjoy staying over night in a beautiful community lodge in Phakeo village after a fantastic trekking from a plain of Jars site (it consists of more than 400 Jars) located about 800 meters from the village.

Old Xieng Khouang (Muang Khoun)

Muang Khoun is located 3 km southeast of Phonsavan. This town was once the royal capital, the centre of the Phuan kingdom. Though the town was heavily bombed during the war, a few French colonial buildings remain in the town centre alongside Wat Si Phum with its large sitting Buddha. On the outskirts the ancient stupas tower over the city and the vistas surrounding the structures are well worth the hike. A few kilometres beyond the old capital, near the village of Ban Phai, lies a jar site, the jars are located just off an old dirt road and unlike the jars at the three main sites are manufactured out of granite.

That Foun

Located in downtown Muang Khoun, That Foun was built in 1576 the same time as the original That Luang in Vientiane. The stupa was erected to cover ashes of Lord Buddha that were brought from India, during a time when buddhism was proliferating in Laos.



Other Attractios in Muang Sui

It is worthwhile to travel around this district and town; ruins of several older temples can be seen: *Vat Ban Phong*, which still has resident monks, once contained a beautiful bronze Xieng Khouang-style Buddha called Pha Ong, said to have been made in the 14th Century.

Towards the eastern end of the district, a large picturesque natural lake called *Nong Tang*, flanked by high limestone cliffs, is a favourite local site for picnics. Directions to the fine caves in the cliffs to the north-east of the lake have been signposted, or you may be able to hire a local guide from one of the noodle stalls near the lake. Also near the lake is a semi-ruined 15th century Xieng Khouang-style stupa called *That Banmang*.

Further afield are two more limestone caves well worth visiting. Tham Pha is a large network of caverns in which hundreds of small Buddha figures were stashed away to protect them from Haw invasions a couple of centuries ago. In the main entry cavern stands a very large sitting Buddha. The cave continues deep into the hillside, with ample passageways linking one cavern with another, making it one of the most impressive caves in Laos. Electric lights have been set up so that visitors can easily tour most of the accessible caverns, and the caretaker will turn them on for a small donation. Near Tham Pha is a second large cave, Tham That, which contains an old ruined Stupa.



Vat Phiawat

Was built in 1564, but the 'sim' (holy building) additions were made in 1582. In 1966, the vat was destroyed by T28 aircraft gunfire, and now, only the pillars of the building and stately Buddha remain.

That Chomphet

Built in the same period as That Foun and located nearby, That Chomphet was created to evoke Buddhist values, inspiring truth and clarity. At the core of Buddhism is the belief that only merit-making (i.e. doing good deeds, maintaining morality and respect) will bring happiness, progress and prosperity. That Chomphet was almost completely destroyed in 1966 during the war.

Muang Sui

Once a city of antique Buddhist temples and quaint provincial architecture, Muang Sui became the headquarters of the Neutralist faction in the 1960's and 'Lima site 18' (a landing site used by US aircraft).

The district is now called Muang Phou Kood experienced some intense fighting during the Secret War and testimonies to this can be seen in the cratered landscape and in the numerous war memorabilia, such as bomb shells, tanks and military positions.

Like Xieng Khouang, the town is now undergoing reconstruction and is part of new district called Muang Phu Kut. On government maps the town may be called Ban Nong Tang.

Local Products and Handicrafts



Paper Umbrellas “Khan Hom” from Ban Mixay

An old tradition is being revived in the Phuan village of Ban Mixay. The umbrellas were originally made by monks or novices at buddhist temples. Men who were ordained into the monkhood often entered temples in villages others than those they had grown up. The umbrellas served as gift to those who came to visit.

Sale of umbrellas can increase income and therefore reduce the need to carry out unsustainable farming practices or cutting down trees - practices that are destructive to the environment. Many materials used come from the forest which provides extra incentive for forest conservation.

MAKING THE FRAME

The making of the umbrella frame involves measuring, cutting and piecing together pieces of bamboo. The spokes of the umbrella frame are made from ‘mai hok’ and the struts from ‘mai pong’ or



'mai louang' bamboo. Of particular importance is the center piece from which spokes and struts radiate.

Making the paper (PO SA)

The Po Sa paper is made from the bark of the mulberry tree. The outer pulp of the tree is pounded and mixed with water. Then the paste is poured into the frame and the fibers separated until they are evenly distributed. The frame is then set to dry in the sun.

Fixing the paper and Dying

The dried paper is cut and glued to the spoke. The glue is made from the sap of the banana tree. The paper is dyed with natural dyes; sesame oil e.g. produces a white color and the roots of the 'mak bao' fruit a red color.





Spoons from Ban Napia



Since the late 1980's the people of Ban Napia produce spoons made of aluminum scrap from the Indochina war. Big metal pieces are melted directly in the fire, small pieces in a separate chamber above the fire.

Once melted the metal is poured into wooden molds. The molds are opened after about one minute and reused quickly. Fine ashes are used to prevent friction.

The spoons are sold at local markets and widely used in the small restaurants in Xieng Khouang.





Hmong Khaen from Ban Souamone

The mouth organ, which is called qeej in Hmong language, is used for contact with spirits. It is played in the house only during funeral rites.

The qeej is made up of six bamboo pieces of different lengths and diameters, passing through a wind chest made of reddish hardwood. The instrument has a long neck which tapers up from the wind chest to the brass mouthpiece.





Brooms from Ban Nakoh

Broom grass, locally called Khaem, is found in the northern provinces of Laos and grows well on fallow lands, valleys and lightly-shaped slopes, ravines and river banks. Broom grass stems are sundried for three to five days.

Seeds are removed by threshing and the grass stems are bound together to form the later broom handles. 1 kg of flowering grass produces two brooms. A person can make five to ten brooms in a day and these can be stored for many years. The brooms are sold Locally.

Tourist Information and Local Product Exhibition Center

Located in the Center of Phonsavanh town, it is a beautiful tourist information and local product exhibition center where provides promotional materials and show famous handicraft and textile products especially from Ban Nasi and Na O Villages.



Events and Festivals

Almost every month of the year there is either a local festival or celebration in Laos. The word for festival in Lao is boun, which also means doing good things in order to gain merit for subsequent lives. If you are in Xieng Khouang while any of the festivals are taking place you will surely be welcomed and asked to join the fun. Please feel free to participate, however remember that most of the festivals are based on religious beliefs, so your hosts will appreciate it if you respect local codes of behavior.

January-February

Kud Chin & Tet Viet

(Chinese & Vietnamese New Year)

Chinese and Vietnamese Lunar New Year is celebrated with parties, fireworks and merit making at temples. Chinese and Vietnamese businesses usually close for three days.

April

Pi Mai Lao (Lao New Year)

During the week of 14-16 April the whole country celebrates. Buddha images are cleansed with sacred water and in the vats offerings of fruit and flowers are made. People take to the streets splashing water on one another and having parties everywhere. In Xieng Khouang some years boat races take place at the Souphanouvong Lake. Be advised that during Pi Mai Lao most businesses and government offices are closed.

April-May
Boun Bang Fai (Rocket Festival)

Boun Bang Fai is a rainmaking and fertility festival that takes place just before the rainy season. Villagers make rockets from bamboo and homemade gunpowder and parade their colorful rockets noisily around the village before they are shot into the sky to 'fertilize' the clouds and bring rain which in turn feeds the rivers and fields.

July
Boun Khao Pansa (Buddhist Lent)

This festival, held on the full moon, marks the beginning of Buddhist lent, a three month period where monks are required to stay within their temple to pray and meditate. Lao men are traditionally ordained as monks during this time.

August
Boun Khao Padap Din

Special offerings are made to the deceased on the new moon of the 9th lunar month.

October Boun Ork Pansa
End of Buddhist Lent

Held on the full moon this festival celebrates the end of Buddhist lent. In the evening small banana-leaf boats called heua fai are launched at Nam Ngum and Supanouvong Lake filled with colorful incense, flowers, candles and a small amount of money to bring luck and prosperity.

December

Hmong New Year

Hmong New Year, Xieng Khouang's most colorful festival attracts crowds of people from around the province as well as Hmong from overseas. The festival is celebrated either in 2010.6 to 14. December, starting from the 15th day of the ascending moon to give thanks to ancestors and spirits at the end of the annual agricultural cycle. Traditionally it lasts ten days bringing people together from many villages, and it is here that young people typically find a husband or a wife. The special celebrations involve colorful displays of traditional costumes made from green, red and white silk and ornate silver jewelry. People enjoy the music of traditional Hmong instruments such as the teun-flute, Hmong khaen and leaf blowing. Other festivities include the Makkhon (cotton ball) throwing ceremony as part of a charming courting ritual, crossbow competitions and traditional games such as bull fighting and top spinning.

Khmu New Year is celebrated within the Khmu communities in late December following the annual rice harvest.

The Baci Ceremony

Spiritual and ritualistic practices are important to most Lao people. The Baci is an ancient pre-Buddhist ritual traditionally conducted by Tai speakers. The Baci is the most popular Lao traditional ceremony celebrated at special events, whether a marriage, a homecoming, a welcome, a birth, or even to help cure sickness. It involves the ritualistic tying of cotton threads to ensure blessings of the spirits on specific persons, activities, or places. It is an important gesture of reconciliation and is believed to restore the natural order of things.

Where to Stay

★ Chittavanh Hotel

No. of Rooms : 33
Room Rate : USD 20 - 40
Address : No,7Rd, Phone Savanh Tai Village,
Paek District.
Tel: +856- 61 213777
Email : CTVHotel@hotmail.com



★ Dok Khoune Hotel

No. of Rooms : 46
Room Rate : USD 10 - 15
Address : Phonekham Village, Paek District.
Tel: +856-61 213284



★ Phou Xang Hotel

No. of Rooms : 18
Room Rate : USD 10 - 40
Address : Phonesavankang Village,
Peak District.
Tel: +856- 61 312 097



Anoulakhanlao Hotel

Phonesavansay Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 213599

Duangkeomany Hotel

Phonsaattai Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 85621-61 312104

Maly Hotel

Phonsaatneua Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 312131

Phoupadeng Hotel

Phonsavang Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55170282

Phonsavanh Hotel

Phonesavansay Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 312206

Phoukham Hotel

Phonesavansay Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 98866888

Angpathong Guesthouse

Phonkham Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55661578

Banna Guesthouse

Then Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856- 61 212484

Bouthala Guesthouse

Phonthong Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55068414

Boukham Guesthouse

Saylom Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55976809

Ber 5 Guesthouse

Phonngamneua Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 212349

Champa Guesthouse

Phonngamtai Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55622494

Daophouan Guesthouse

Then Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55561130

Eltec Guesthouse

Yuan Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 312244

Huaphan Guesthouse

Phonsavanhkang Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 211280

Haihin Guesthouse

Yuan Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 22234589

Khamdy Guesthouse

Phonsavang Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 56077234

Khonsy Guesthouse

Phonsavanneua Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 211170

Keoudone Guesthouse

Phonsavang Village, Pek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55561131

Kongkeo Guesthouse

Phonsavansay Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 211345

Koukham Guesthouse

Phonsavansay Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 211216

Khamgkhai Guesthouse

Khangkhai Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 56640999

Khemphon Guesthouse

Saylom Village, Pek District.
Tel: + 856-20 56012929

Kounmany Guesthouse

Namngam Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55472628

Kounjeung Guesthouse

Phonsavanneua Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 56044524

Khounkham Guesthouse

Phonthong Village, Pek District.
Tel: + 856-20 56080555

Laphonkham Guesthouse

Phonkham Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 22944777

Lao-jin Guesthouse

Then Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 22341122

Mouangphoune Guesthouse

Phonsavangkang Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 312046

Nice Guesthouse

Phonsavankang Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 312454

Nemphou Guesthouse

Phonngamtai Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 213300

Namjai Guesthouse

Phonsavankang Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 22937744

Phonsa at Guesthouse

Phonsa at tai Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 99520378

Phoukham Guesthouse

Then Village, Pek District.
Tel: + 856-61 312121

Phonkham Guesthouse

Phonkham Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55874357

Sainamngum Guesthouse

Phonavantai Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55660650

Sabaidy Guesthouse

Phonsavankang Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 56801618

Sypraseuth Guesthouse

Namngam Village, Pek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55661115

Samphandoungpaob Guesthouse

Ngoi Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 212338

Sengtavanh Guesthouse

Phonsavanneua Village, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-61 211131

Southa Guesthouse

Saylom Village, Pek District.
Tel: + 856-20 55189969

Singthong Guesthouse

Phonngamneua, Paek District.
Tel: + 856-20 98156378





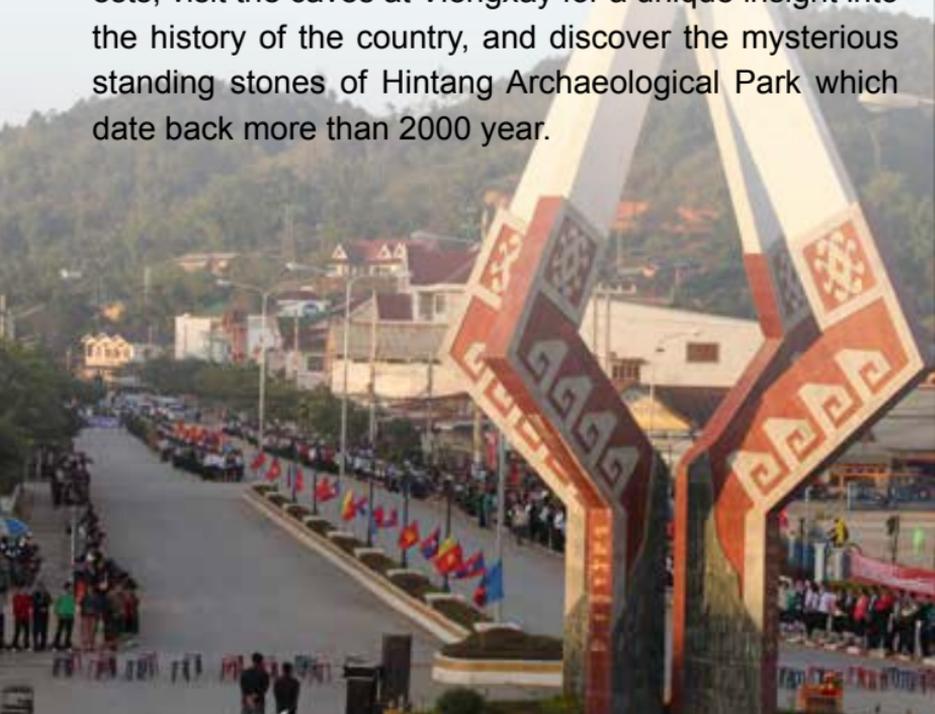
Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | Road |  | International Border Crossing |
|  | Route Indicator |  | International Border |
|  | Capital of Province |  | Provincial Border |
|  | District | | |

Houaphanh Province

- Location:** Houaphanh is enclosed by Vietnam to the north, east and south-east, Xieng Khouang to the south-west and Luang Prabang to the west
- Total area:** 16,500 square kilometers
- Population:** 317,946 people (2010)
- Districts:** Xamneua, Xiengkhor, Viengthong, Viengxay, Houameuang, Xam Tay, Sop Bao and Et
- Capital:** Xam Neua

Houaphanh Province is the birthplace of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. As yet, it is one of the least visited provinces in the country and offers an authentic and varied experience for visitors. Enjoy a pristine natural environment of mountains, rivers, waterfalls and forests, visit the caves at Viengxay for a unique insight into the history of the country, and discover the mysterious standing stones of Hintang Archaeological Park which date back more than 2000 year.





Where to Visit

Viengxay Caves

The Viengxay Caves, also called the “Hidden City”, is a network of caves used by the Pathet Lao (the Lao revolutionary movement) and the site of an unprecedented but little known episode in world history. Guided audio tours are available from the Kaysone Phomvihane Memorial Cave Office.

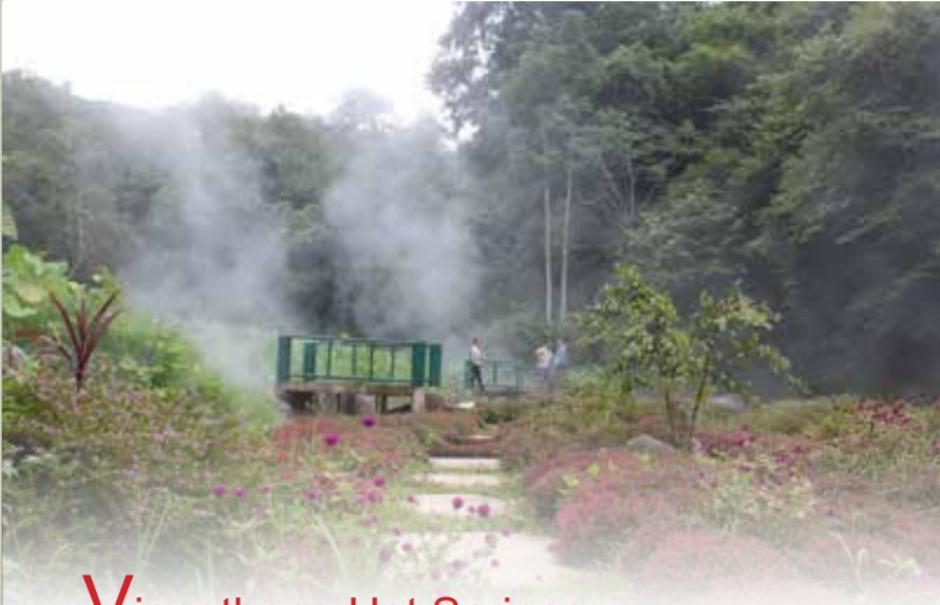
See pages 46-51 for more details.



Hintang Archaeological Park (Standing Stones)

Dating some 2,000 years, these menhirs (standing stones) were first examined in 1931, and burial sites in the area contained some ancient trinkets. Marked by standing rock slabs and stone disks, these relics, predating the Plain of Jars, are located along a 12-km mountain ridge in the province's south.





Viengthong Hot Springs

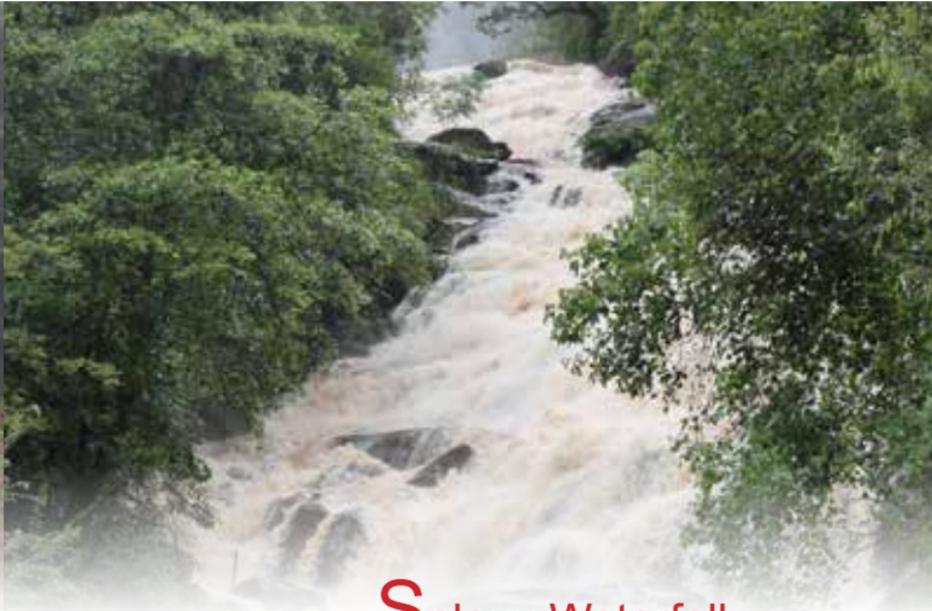
The springs are located approximately 1 km north of the town. The water in some of the springs reaches a temperature up to 100°C and the site offers opportunities for medicinal bathing, or even cooking your own breakfast/lunch of boiled eggs!



Nam Nua Waterfall

Nam Nua waterfall, located just off the road between Xam Neua and Vieng Xay, is approximately 80 m high. The top of the waterfall is directly accessible from the road and is at its most stunning just after the rainy season.





Saleuy Waterfall

The waterfall is located near Saleuy Village on the road from Phonesavan to Xam Neua, approximately 35 km from Xam Neua town. The waterfall, which is approximately 100 m high, is directly accessible from the road, and is a popular picnic spot for local people especially during the Lao New Year holidays. Ban Saleuy and nearby Ban Phonxay also produce quality woven textile that make excellent souvenirs.



Yao, Hmong and Tai Deng Ethnic Minority Villages

Houaphan is one of the most ethnically diverse provinces in Lao PDR. It is home to 22 different ethnic groups, among them, Hmong, Tai Deng and Yao. Ethnic minority villages are dotted along many of the roads around the province and people of the different minorities are often to be seen buying and selling goods at the market in Xam Neua.





Six Sites in Xam Neua

Independence Monument

The Independence Monument, situated 1 km from the town centre was constructed in 1978. The monument, located on a hill at the north-west edge of the town, offers a panoramic view of the provincial capital.

Vat Phoxaysanalam

Vat Phoxaysanalam is the best known temple in Xam Neua and is located about 1 km from the town centre at the end of Phathi Road. It was constructed in 1956 and is home to a very old Buddha statue dating from 1565 and weighing 3,850 kg. The temple is surrounded by stupas, a range of houses (Kuti) for novices, monks and the most senior monk. You can ask the novices to open the door of the “Sim” where the Buddha figures are kept.

Just before noon (11.00 am – 11.30 am) you may see local people bringing food for the monks.





Weaving Houses

You can see the weaving techniques used to create the cotton and silk textiles for which the province is famous at a number of weaving houses located near the temple. The finished products are of a very high quality, many are exported to countries such as Singapore and Japan.

Stupas

500 metres from the town centre, situated beside and opposite the Phanxay Hotel, are two old stupas and are among the few structures to have survived bombardment. During colonial times, there was a temple located here and the stupas were located in the grounds of that temple.

Xam Neua Market

Xam Neua has two markets dotted around the town. The first one is situated across the Nam Xam River and offers a range of products including silk textiles and ethnic minority clothing. The second market is further up Phathi Road on the way to Phoxaysanalam Temple. This market also sells different foodstuffs.





Nam Xam River Promenade

The promenade starts at the bridge near Khaemxam Guesthouse. Walk along the river bank. Across the river, you will see people selling and buying clothing, food and other items at the market. Soon you will come to a concrete footpath.

Follow the path along the river where you can see various types of bamboo trees and rice fields and vegetable gardens on the opposite bank. If you are walking at 4.00 or 5.00 pm you may see people watering their gardens. In June and July you may see people planting rice, while visitors in November will see the harvesting process. Continue on this path until you reach a narrow, metal and wood suspension bridge. Step on to the middle of the bridge to admire the river views. Continue your promenade to the second suspension bridge where you can enjoy further views of the river before rejoining the road and return to the centre of Town.



Viengxay Brithplace of the Lao PDR

Discovering
the
“Hidden City”

Viengxay, Revolutionary Stronghold

Limestone peaks form a beautiful landscape around Viengxay. But hidden in these rocky crags are networks of caves which were at the centre of a vital period in Lao and world history.

During the second half of the 20th century political developments in Laos were influential in the future of the whole region. In the 1960s the United States believed that Laos was a crucial area to stop communist expansion, and Laos was dragged into the war between the US and Vietnamese communists. In 1964, the US began intensive bombing of the Lao communist movement - Pathet Lao - base area in Xieng Khouang. The Pathet Lao moved east to Viengxay and these limestone karst cave networks sheltered their headquarters during their struggle with the American-backed Royal Lao Government.





The “Hidden City”

In these caves the Pathet Lao established a ‘hidden city’ which supported a population of around 20,000 people.

During nine years of almost constant bombardment, the population sheltered in the caves and surrounding jungle, carrying out much of their daily lives under cover of darkness. Caves housed essential services such as school, hospitals and markets as well as government ministries, a radio station and military barracks.

Discovering the Story of Viengxay

The story of this unique revolutionary stronghold is an important part of the global political circumstances of the period. Viengxay also tells us about the Lao national struggle for independence and the international communist movement.

Some of the hundreds of caves used have been preserved and are open to visitors. The daily struggle for survival, and diplomatic exchanges between Pathet Lao and communist party leaders worldwide, whose support was crucial to survival in Viengxay, are evident in photographs and mementos that can be seen in the caves and in the Viengxay Caves Visitor Centre. A stop audio tour is available from the Kaysone Phomvihane Memorial Cave Office.

Viengxay Caves Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre contains displays about the history of the conflict, and provides tourist information for the area. You can hire a bicycle for touring the caves or the Town.

Opening Hours

Viengxay Caves Visitor Centre is open every day from 8am to 12 noon and 1.30 to 4.30pm.

Audio Tours of the Leaders' Caves

Tours in English - daily at 9 am and 1 pm

Tours in Lao - daily at 9 am, 10.30am, 1pm and 3pm

You can take a tour at other times during Visitor Centre open hours for an extra charge per group

Viengxay Caves Visitor Centre

Phone: 064 314321

Caves Open to Visitors

Kaysone Phomvihane's Cave

The home of the General-Secretary of the Lao Communist Party, Kaysone Phomvihane, this cave was the central meeting area for the Politburo. Here the leaders of the revolution discussed political, military and ideological planning for the future Lao PDR. Kaysone's wife and children lived with him in the cave throughout the period.

Nouhak Phoumsavan's Cave

Minister of Finance and the Economy in the Pathet Lao government, Nouhak Phoumsavan went on to become President of the Lao PDR. His jeep, a gift from the Soviet Union, is still parked in the garage.

Prince Souphanouvong's Cave

This cave was the home of Prince Souphanouvong throughout the conflict. A trained civil engineer, Souphanouvong designed his home built outside the caves in 1973. A monument to his eldest son, assassinated by an anti-Pathet Lao agent in 1967, is in his garden.

Phoumi Vongvichid's Cave

Phoumi Vongvichid was Minister of Education and Public Health in the revolutionary government. In the same peak is the cave of Sithon Kommadam, Lao Theung representative - he was believed to be immune to bullets.

Khamtay Siphandone's Cave and Military Headquarters

Khamtay Siphandone was Politburo Member with responsibility for the military and defence, and later President of the Lao PDR. His cave connects to a number of military caves, including one of the main caves used for army administration. These series of caves may also have been used as barracks during some bombing raids.

Xanglot Cave

This huge natural cave, very different from the caves of the leaders, formed a central area where large rallies and meetings were held. The cave was also a space for relaxing and entertainment, and was the venue for musical and dance performances by local and foreign artistes.

Artillery Cave

This cave was a military installation. Artillery was manned by soldiers around the clock in order to return fire during US bombing raids. The panoramic view from this cave, set halfway up the cliffside, gives an idea of the area this artillery position covered and of similar artillery installations positioned on surrounding Peaks.

Central Viengxay



-  Open Cave Site
-  Cave Site
-  Viengxay Caves Visitor Centre
-  Bus Station - Market
-  Limestone Peak Area
-  Road
-  Path
-  Lake

Souph

Phoumi Vong

Vietnam 54km

Bus Station

Market

Schools

Monument

Ban Anou

Foreign Guests' Cave

Shop Cave

Ban Naxay

Kaysone Phomvihane Cave

Nouhak Phoumsavan Cave

Phannouvong Cave

Vichid Cave

Sewing Factory Cave



Where to Stay

Keochinda Hotel



Address: Road 6
Nasakang Village,
Xam Neua District, Houaphan Province.
Tel: +856-64 312 775
Mobile: 020 5576 4960

Bounhome Guesthouse



Address: Road 6
Phanxai Village, Xam Neua District,
Houaphan Province.
Tel: +856-64 312 223
Mobile: 020 5509 3444

Chittavanh Hotel

Phanxai Village, Xam Neua District.
Tel: + 856-64 312265

Meesouk Hotel

Meesouk Village, Xam Neua District.
Tel: + 856-64 314555 / 20 56582349

Phetmisay Hotel

Phanxai Village, Xam Neua District.
Tel: + 856-64 312254 / 20 55564105

Phonechanh Hotel

Phanxai Village, Xam Neua District.
Tel: + 856-20 22875552

Samneua Hotel

Nathongchong Village, Xam Neua District.
Tel: + 856-64 314777 / 20 55094444

Angtong Guesthouse

Soplao Village, Houameuang District.
Tel: + 856-20 54094008

Buamngam 2 Guesthouse

Buamngam Village, Houameuang District.
Tel: + 856-20 99453069

Bounleuang Guesthouse

Nathongchong Village, Samneua District.
Tel: + 856-30 55161798

Bounpheng Guesthouse

Xiengkong Village, Xiengkong District.
Tel: + 856-64 314394

Danxam Guesthouse

Thatmeuang Village, Samneua District.
Tel: +856-64 312407 / 2055766270

Dokkhounthong Guesthouse

Natuim Village, Viengthong District.
Tel: + 856-64 800017

Dokchampa Guesthouse

Thathuim Village, Viengthong District.
Tel: + 856-64 800005

Donekeo Guesthouse

Phansavanh Village, Xam Tai District.
Tel: + 856-64 314416

Heuangkhamxay Guesthouse

Natuim Village, Viengthong District.
Tel: + 856-64 810033 / 020 28559333

National Protected Areas



The Lao system of 20 National Protected Areas covers nearly 14% of the country and is recognized as one of the best designed protected areas systems in the world. With large tracts of tropical monsoon forest, diverse wildlife populations and bizarre karst limestone formations riddled with caves, Lao protected areas have an abundance of extraordinary things to see. Although most Lao protected areas are remote and difficult to reach, there are many existing opportunities for ecotourism activities such as trekking, rafting, bird watching and camping that allow you to experience first-hand the country's magnificent natural and cultural diversity.

From Vientiane, the most accessible protected area offering a variety of ecotourism activities is

Phou Khao Khouay, where you can trek, visit spectacular waterfalls and spend the night in an elephant observation tower on the edge of the park. In the provinces, visit Nam Ha in Luang Namtha for trekking, watch birds at the Pha Pho wetland in Champasak's Xe Pian

NPA, trek Dong Phou Vieng in Savannakhet for a chance to see the beautiful Douc Langur.

If you are interested in caves, don't miss the Phou Hin Poun NPA in central Khammouane Province. More activities are being developed in a number of other NPA's; be sure to check with the information staff for news on new ecotourism programs around the country.

Wildlife

Laos is home to over one hundred species of large mammals. Many of these are familiar Asian species such as Tiger, Asian Elephant and Gaur (a species of wild cattle). Lao also holds an impressive diversity of primates including five species of gibbon, five species of macaque and four species of leaf monkey including the incredibly beautiful Douc Langur.

In recent years Lao has received international attention after the discovery of an incredible variety of species new to science. These recent discoveries include the Saola, a strange and beautiful forest dwelling antelope like creature, many small deer species known as muntjacs, a small striped rabbit and a completely new family of rodent known locally as the Kha-nyou that is closely related to porcupines.

In addition to mammals, Lao supports over 165 species of amphibians and reptiles including such impressive species as Rock and Burmese Pythons, King Cobras and the large and noisy Tokay Gecko (Gekko gekko) a formidable resident of many Lao houses.



Opportunities to view this incredible diversity of wildlife are steadily growing. A long history of market and subsistence hunting has depressed many wildlife populations across the country. The increase in ecotourism and traveler's interest in viewing wildlife now provides positive financial reinforcement for residents to conserve many of these species. Let people in Laos know that you want to see wildlife in its natural habitat and visit natural areas.

Laos does have some of the best to offer in the entire world in terms of wildlife and biodiversity. However, many wildlife species are threatened by illegal hunting and the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products. The Lao government takes these offenses very seriously and asks that you refrain from purchasing wildlife and wildlife products.

If you see wildlife being traded, please report it. The Vientiane Capital Division of Forestry and the Wildlife Conservation Society are monitoring the illegal wildlife trade and conducting public awareness about the problem. We would appreciate photos of any wildlife you encounter while in Laos – both captured and in the wild. Please send photos by email to wildlifephotos@wcs.org and be sure to include a short description on where and when the animal was encountered.



Birds

With over 700 species recorded to date and new species being added to the country list almost monthly, Laos is one of the most exciting and least known birding locations in the world. In recent years as the country has embraced ecotourism the opportunities are expanding rapidly for visitors to see a variety of beautiful and rare species.

The Northern Highlands of the country hold numerous species associated with Northern Thailand and the North Eastern Himalayas. A huge diversity of babblers as well as Blyth's Kingfisher, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Beautiful Nuthatch, Short-tailed Parrotbill and Yellow-vented Warbler can be found in the forests of the north.

The Mekong Plain supports areas of dry deciduous forest inhabited by Rufous-winged Buzzards, Black-



headed Woodpeckers and Small Minivets. Ban Sivilai is a community owned and operated bird conservation zone in this area.

The Mekong itself provides an important flyway for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl as well as localized sandbank species such as Small Pratincole, River Lapwing, Great Thick-knee and River Tern. The southern portion of the Mekong Plain along the Cambodian border is home to the incredibly rare White-shouldered and Giant ibis as well as small populations of White-rumped and Red-headed vultures, Lesser Adjutants, Sarus Cranes and White-winged Ducks. The most exciting discovery in the area in recent years has been the description of a new species to science, the Mekong Wagtail. This species was found, within the past decade, to live on sandbanks in the Mekong and a few of its tributaries in southern Lao and Cambodia.

Perhaps the most exciting area for birding in the country is along the Annamite Range that marks the border with Vietnam. In recent years many species once thought to be found only in Vietnam have been discovered in Lao. Species such as Short-tailed Scimitar Babbler, Yellow-billed Nuthatch and the recently described Black-crowned Barwing are all readily found. Slightly more widespread species include White-winged and Indochinese Green Magpies as well as the shy and difficult to see Crested Argus and Blue-naped Pitta.

Another area worthy of mention is the impressive strip of karst limestone that divides the Mekong Plain from the Annamite Range in central Laos. This beautiful landscape is

home to the enigmatic Sooty Babbler. Despite being locally common this species went unseen for decades until being “rediscovered” in the 1990’s.





Handicrafts

Textiles, basketry, silver, woodcarvings and hand-made paper are some of the most popular handicrafts in Laos. Lao weavers are known for producing intricate fabrics in home-spun silk and cotton, most notably, complex mut mee (ikot) patterns based on folklore and natural themes. Some of the best weavers come from the Tai ethnic groups in Houaphan Province. If you are planning a visit to Luang Prabang and are interested in weaving, don't miss Ban Phanom or the night market in the center of town. When visiting one of the country's charming villages, be sure to ask to see local crafts being produced using traditional technologies. Purchasing a handicraft directly from artisans that use natural, traditional production methods supports both local economies and the survival of indigenous knowledge. If you are unable to make it out to the villages, there are handicraft shops in almost every provincial capital selling distinct local products.

Lao Food

Lao cuisine may be little known outside the country, but it is considered one of the healthiest cuisines.

This is due to its affection for fresh vegetables and herbs, which appear in almost every Lao meal. Both meat and fish are usually grilled or steamed and as a result, the flavours are fresh and the dishes are low in fat.

Walk around the numerous food markets and stalls that dot Luang Prabang and Vientiane and you'll be confronted by the fragrances of galangal, lime, lemongrass, basil, coriander, garlic, ginger, mint and dill.

Lao cuisine has many regional variations, due in part to the fresh foods local to each region. You can either enjoy an authentic Lao meal (khao niew or sticky rice is a staple) in many of the restaurants or spend a morning learning to cook delicious Lao dishes for your lunch.

An essential part of enjoying Lao food is Beer Lao. Described as the Dom Perignon of Asian beers, it can be found anywhere throughout the country, from the corner shops to the five-star hotels.

Lao Coffee, strong, sweet and delicious, is another must-try. Laos produces some of the finest Arabica in the world, and whether you like hot or cold, black or milky, a cup of this fine stuff will set you up for the rest of the day.

Laap, a traditional Lao food is made from chopped meat, chicken or duck is a favourite. The finely chopped meat, spices and broth is mixed with uncooked rice grains that have been dry fried, and crushed. Laap is eaten with a plate of raw vegetables and sticky rice.



Lao PDR, Embassies and Consulates Abroad

AUSTRALIA

Embassy of the Lao PDR.1 Dalman Crescent Omalley,
Canberra
ACT 2606, Australia.
Tel: (61 2) 6286 4595, 6286 6933
Fax: (61 2) 6290 1910

BELGIUM

Embassy of the Lao PDR.
Avenue de la Brabanconne
19-21bis, 1000 Bruxelles.
Tel: (322) 740 0950
Fax : (322) 734 1666

BRUNEI

Embassy of the Lao PDR.
Simfong 480 Jalang Kebang S
aan Lama 3786 off Jalan Muara
Bandar Seri Begawan 3786
Tel : (673 02) 345 666
Fax: (673 02) 345 588

CAMBODIA

Embassy of the Lao PDR.
15-17 Mao Tse Tung Bld 245,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
Tel: (855 23) 982 632
Fax: (855 23) 720 907

CUBA

Embassy of the Lao PDR.
7 Ave Calle 36 A 505 Miramar,
La Havana, Cuba.
Tel: (53 7) 241 056
Fax: (53 7) 249 622

CHINA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF

Embassy of the Lao PDR.
11 Salitun Dongsie Jie,
Beijing 100600.
Tel: (86 1) 6523 1224.
6523 5173, 6523 5652
Fax: (86 1) 6532 6748

KUNMING:

Consulate General of Lao PDR.
Camellia Hotel Room 3226,
154 East Dong Feng Road,
Kunming 650041, PDR. of China.
Tel: (86 871) 317 6623-24
Fax: (86 871) 317 8556

Nanning:

Consulate General of the Lao PDR.
16 Guihua Road Qingxiu, Nanning, Guangxi China
Tel: (+867) 7156 72501 / 72502
Fax: (+867) 7156 72503

Shanghai:

Consulate General of the Lao PDR.
Fax: (+866) 9189 80669

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Fax: (+852) 2544 1187
E-mail: lao01_cons@ctimail.com
Office hours: 09.00-12.00 and 13.30-17.00
Head of mission: Leokham Inthavong, Vice-Consul

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74 Ave Raymond Poincare,
75116 Paris, France.
Tel: (33 1) 4553 0298, 4554 7047
Fax: (33 1) 4727 5789

GERMANY

Embassy of the Lao PDR.
Botschaft der Demokratischen Volk republil Laos
Bismarccrallee 2a, 14193 Berlin
Tel: (49 30) 8906 0647
Fax: (49 30) 8906 0648-49

INDIA

Embassy of the Lao PDR.
A-104/7, Parmanand Estate,
Maharini Bagh, New Delhi 110065, India.
Tel: (9111) 632 3048, 693 3319
Fax: (9111) 632 3048, 693 3320

INDONESIA

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Timur Jakarta 12950, Indonesia.
Tel: (62 21) 522 9602
Fax: (62 21) 522 9601

JAPAN

Embassy of the Lao PDR.
3-3-22 Nishi-Azabu
Minato-Ku, Tokyo 106
Tel: (81 3) 5411 2291, 5411 2292
Fax: (81 3) 5411 2293

KOREA, DPR OF

Embassy of the Lao PDR.
MunhungDong, Talelonggan
District, Pyongyang.
Tel: (00850 2) 381 7363
Fax: (00850 2) 381 7722

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Embassy of the Lao PDR
657-9 Hannam Dong,
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MONGOLIA

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MYANMAR

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A-1 Diplomatic Quarter,
Taw Win Road, Dagan Township,
Yangon, Myanmar.
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PHILIPPINES

Embassy of the Lao PDR
34 Lapu-Lapu Street, Magallanes Village,
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Fax: (63 2) 852 5759

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Ul Regtana 15/26, 02-516
Warsaw, Poland.
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Fax: (48 2) 497 122

RUSSIA

Embassy of the Lao PDR
Moscow 131940 UL Malaya,
Nikitakay 18, Moscow Russia.
Tel: (7 095) 203 1454, 291 7218
Fax: (7 095) 290 4246, 203 0158

SINGAPORE

Embassy of the Lao PDR
479-b Gold Hill Center,
Thomson Road, Singapore.
Tel: (65) 250 6044, 783 0503
Fax: (65) 250 6014

SWEDEN

Embassy of the Lao PDR
S-11265 Stockholm,
Badstrandvagen 11, 112-65
Stockholm, Sweden.
Tel: (46 8) 618 2010, 695 0160
Fax: (46 8) 618 2001

THAILAND

Embassy of the Lao PDR
520-522/1-3Ramkhamhaeng
Soi 39, Bangkapi, Bangkok 10310, Thailand.
Tel: (66 2) 538 3696,
539 7341, 539 3642
Fax: (66 2) 539 6678, 539 3827
Consulate: (66 2) 538 3735

KHONKAEN:

Consulate General of Lao PDR
171/102-3 Prachasamosorn Road,
Khonkaen 40000, Thailand.
Tel: (66 43) 230 110, 242 858
Fax: (66 43) 244 918

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Embassy of the Lao PDR
49 Porchester Terrace
London W2 3TS
United Kingdom
Tel: (+44) 20 7402 3770

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Permanent Mission of Lao PDR
317 East 51 ST Street,
New York, NY 10022, USA.
Tel: (1 212) 832 2734
Fax: (1 212) 750 0039

Embassy of Lao PDR
2222 S Street N.W
Washington D.C 20008, USA
Tel: (1 202) 332 6416, 332 6417
Fax: (1 202) 332 4923

VIETNAM, SOCIALIST

REPUBLIC OF
Embassy of the Lao PDR
22 Tran Bing Trong Road,
Hanoi, S.R Vietnam.
Tel: (84 4) 942 4576, 942 2435
942 9746, 942 2253
Fax : (84 4) 822 8414

HO CHI MINH City:

Consulate General of Lao PDR.93 Pasteur St, District 1,
Ho Chi Minh City, S.R Vietnam.
Tel: (84 8) 829 7667,828 9275
Fax: (84 8) 829

DANANG City:

Consulate General of Lao PDR
12 Tran Quy /Cap Street,
Danang City, S.R Vietnam.
Tel: (845 11) 821 208, 822 628
Fax: (845 11) 822 628
Canberra,

Foreign Embassies and Consulates in Lao PDR

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY

Km 4, Thadeua Road Sisattanak District
Vientiane, Lao PDR.
Tel: (856-21) 353 800
Fax:(856-21) 353 801

BELGIUM EMBASSY

(Development Cooperation)
3rd Floor VTCB Building,
33 LaneXang Avenue,
Ban Hatsadi, Vientiane.
Tel: (856-21) 222 712
Fax : (856-21) 218 796

BRITISH EMBASSY VIENTIANE

Rue J. Nehru
Phonexay,
Saysettha District,
Vientiane Laos
BritishEmbassy.Vientiane@fco.gov.uk
Telephone +856 (0)30 770 0000

BRITISH TRADE OFFICE

Nehru Street, Ban Phonxay,
Vientiane Municipality.
Tel: (856-21) 413 606
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Ban Xieng Ngun, Chanthabouly District
Setthathirath Road
Vientiane, Laos PDR
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Fax : (856-21) 255234
Email: vientiane.laos@mfa.gov.bn

CAMBODIA EMBASSY

Thadeua Road Km 3, Sisattanak District
Vientiane Lao PDR.
Tel: (856-21) 314 952
Fax:(856-21) 314 951

CHINA, PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF, EMBASSY

Watnak Street Village, Sisatanak District,
Vientiane Lao PDR.

Tel: (856-21) 315 100, 315 103, 315 105

Fax:(856-21) 315 104

CUBA EMBASSY

Bourichane Rd, Naxay Village, Saysetha District,
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FRENCH EMBASSY

Setthathirath Road,
Ban Sisaket, Vientiane.

Tel:(856-21) 267 400, 215 257-9

Fax: (856-21) 267429, 267 439

GERMAN EMBASSY

26 Sokpaluang Road,
Vientiane, Lao PDR

Tel: (856-21) 312 110, 312 111

Fax : (856-21) 351 152

INDIAN EMBASSY

Unit 7, Ban Saphanthong Kang
opp. Wat Saphantong Neua
Vientiane, Lao PDR

P.O.Box: 225

Tel: (856-21) 352 301-3,

Fax: (856-21) 352 300

Email: info@indianembassy Laos.org

INDONESIAN EMBASSY

Kaysone Phomvihane Avenue,
Vientiane, Lao PDR

Tel : (856-21) 413 900, 413 909, 413 910

Fax:(856-21)214 828, 2188 527

JAPANESE EMBASSY

Sisangvone Road,
Vientiane. Lao PDR

Tel: (856-21) 414 400-3

Fax: (856-21) 414 406

KOREA, PDR OF, EMBASSY

Ban Thaphalansay,
Vientiane Capital.
Tel: (856 21) 315 261
Fax : (856 21) 315 260

KOREAN REPUBLIC EMBASSY

Ban Watnak, Sisattanak District, Vientiane.
Tel: (856-21) 352 031-3
Fax: (856-21) 352 035, 352 743

MALAYSIA EMBASSY

23 Rue Singha, Ban Phonxay, Saysethha District
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856-21) 414 205-6
Fax : (856-21) 414 201

MONGOLIA EMBASSY

Ban Watnak, Thadeua Rd. Km 3,
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856-21) 315 220
Fax : (856-21) 315 221

MYANMAR EMBASSY

Ban Watnak, Lao-Thai Roak, Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856-21) 314 910-1
Fax:(856-21) 314 913

PHILIPPINES EMBASSY

Ban Saphanthong kang,
Sisattanak District,
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856-21) 452 490-1
Fax: (856-21) 452 493

POLISH EMBASSY

263 Thadeua Road, Ban Watnak,
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856 21) 312 940
Fax : (856 21) 312 058

SWEDISH EMBASSY

01-36 Sokpaluang Street, Ban Watnak,
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856-21) 313 772
Fax : (856-21) 315 001

RUSSIA FEDERATION EMBASSY

Sisattanak District, Ban Thaphalansay
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856-21) 312 219, 312 222
Fax: (856-21) 312 210

SINGAPORE EMBASSY

Thadeua Road, km 3, Unit 4m, Watnak Village,
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856-21) 353 939
Fax: (856-21) 353 938

ROYAL THAI EMBASSY

Kaisone Phomvihane Avenue, Saysettha District
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856-21) 214 581-3
Fax: (856-21) 214 580

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA EMBASSY

Ban Somsanouk, Thadeua Road,
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856-21) 267 000
Fax: (856-21) 267 190

VIETNAMESE EMBASSY

Ban Phonsay, Saysetha Sistrict,
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: (856-21) 413 401, 413 409
Fax: (856-21) 413 379

VIETNAMESE CONSULATE

Ban Watphabat, Pakse,
Champasak Province.
Tel: (856 31) 212 058
Fax: (856 31) 214 140, 212 058

Useful Links and Telephone Numbers

Country code: 856

Lao National Tourism Administration (LNTA)

Tel: (21) 212 248, 212251

Fax: (21) 212 769

www.tourismlaos.org

www.ecotourismlaos.com

Email: tmpd_inta@yahoo.com

Tourist Police: (21) 251128

Vientiane Governor office: 412 502

Immigration Head office: (21) 212 520

Wattay Airport: (21) 512 012

Friendship bridge: (21) 812 040

Thanaleng Train Station: (21) 820228

Lao Association of Travel gents(LATA)

Tel: (21) 251 769, Fax: (21) 251 770

Email: info@latalaos.org

www.latalaos.org

Lao Hotel and Restaurant Association(LHRA)

Email: laohra@lanexangnet.com

Tel: (21) 241 017, Fax: (21) 262 542

Email: bookings@laos-hotel-link.com

Lao Airline

Tel: (21) 212 057

Fax: (21) 212 065

www.laoairlines.com

Email: reservation@laoairlines.com

Bus Station in Vientiane:

Bus Station: Northern Bus: (21) 261 905

Southern Bus: (21) 740 521-2

Morning Market: (21) 216 507

Hospital in Vientiane:

Hospital: Mahosot Hospital: (21) 214 024

Sethathirat Hospital: (21) 351 156

Mittaphab Hospital: (21) 710 006

Emergency

Police : 1191

Fire : 1190

Ambulance: 1195

Electricity: 1199