



Villagers of Ban Ta Ong

History of Brow People and Ta Ong Village

The Brow ethnic group (also referred to as Lavae) is part of the Mon-Khmer linguistic branch and is primarily located in the southern provinces of Laos and adjacent areas in northeastern Cambodia. The Brow traditionally practice Animism, and worship spirits and ancestors. Ban Ta Ong villagers also incorporate Buddhism into their traditions. Traditional clothes of the Brow are made from tree bark fiber - however, many now wear cotton clothes. The Brow are also great hunters, and Ban Ta Ong is well-known for its giant crossbow, which is said to shoot as far as 200 meters. Over the past centuries the village has moved from location to location within the Xe Pian area. According to village elders, Ban Ta Ong has been in its current location since the 1940s.

Xe Pian National Protected Area

Xe Pian National Protected Area is considered one of the most important protected areas in Laos due to its high biodiversity, globally significant wildlife and forest habitats. The area covers 2,400 square kilometers over Champasak and Attapeu Provinces and shares a border with Cambodia. Habitats include evergreen, mixed-evergreen, and deciduous forest types, as well as numerous seasonal wetlands which are fed by three main rivers - the Xe Pian, the Xe Khampho and the Xe Kong. Key species include: tiger, banteng, irrawaddy dolphin, Asian elephant, gaur, sun bear, Asiatic black bear, and yellow-cheeked crested gibbon. Xe Pian has the highest number of birds recorded for any protected area in Laos. Important species include the giant ibis, black ibis, sarus crane, white-winged duck and the white rumped, long billed and red headed vultures. Your village guides have a deep knowledge of the forest ecology and will interpret its amazing attractions for you.

Do's and Don'ts



THESE REQUESTS COME DIRECTLY FROM THE VILLAGERS

Do's and Don'ts on the Trek

- **Dress Modestly**
Please wear shirts that cover shoulders and pants or skirts that cover your knees. Shirts with a low neckline are not appropriate.
- **Public Bathing:**
Please do not bathe nude in public. Women should cover up with a sarong when bathing in public.
- **Photographs**
Please ask before taking close-ups or portraits. Respect those who choose not to be photographed.
- **Gifts**
Please do not give anything to children as this practice encourages begging. Also, do not give medicine to anyone but a doctor or nurse.
- **Body Language**
In Laos, your head is 'high' and your feet 'low' - don't gesture with your feet, and don't put your feet on furniture. Also, do not touch someone else's head. Kissing and hugging in public is impolite - please be discreet.
- **Respect Local Traditions**
Please do not touch anything that may be of religious significance, such as Buddha statues, altars, and burial grounds. Please take off hats and shoes when entering temples.
- **Environment**
Do not litter on land or in water; take your garbage with you. Do not buy wildlife or wildlife products.
- **Purchasing Local Crafts**
Please support local producers by purchasing newly made quality handicrafts. Do not purchase unique items such as antiques or family heirlooms that are irreplaceable.
- **Drugs**
Please do not do drugs in Laos. Drug tourism does damage and sets a very bad example for Lao youth.



www.ecotourismlaos.com/mtdp

Xe Pian National Protected Area



TA ONG TRAIL

- Two-day Forest Trek
- Birds and Wildlife
- Champasak Province, Lao PDR



www.ecotourismlaos.com

Ta Ong Trail

During this two-day trek you will explore Xe Pian National Protected Area's diverse forests with knowledgeable village guides, who will teach you about its many medicinal plants and non-timber forest products and point out signs of wildlife (tracks, scat and habitat). Ride canoes (water levels permitting) on the first day up the Ta' Euang River from Palai Bok village to Nong Ping village, viewing a variety of colorful birds, bamboo forests, and, if you are lucky, monkeys, too. In the evening, stay overnight in an ethnic Brow village, Ban Ta Ong, and enjoy traditional hospitality and local food in this remote and natural setting. On the second day, rise early before sunrise and take a walk to a nearby forest with local guides to listen to sounds of birds, squirrels and possibly hear the song-like calls of the endangered yellow-cheeked crested gibbon. Return by foot through thick jungle, stopping along the way for a relaxing forest picnic.

Optional Activities

In the afternoon on your way back from the trek, ask your guide to stop over in Ban Kiet Ngong for an elephant ride to Phou Asa Mountain (1.5 hrs). You can also extend your stay in Xe Pian NPA by overnighing at the Kiet Ngong village bungalows or at the more upscale, privately owned, Kingfisher Ecolodge.

Level of Difficulty and Trail Condition

This trek involves approximately three to five hours of moderate walking per day. Although the trail is mostly flat with only a few short climbs, it can be difficult as the jungle is thick and wild. It is recommended that trekkers be in good physical condition and be prepared for adventure. It is also advised that trekkers be prepared for walking through small streams and be extra careful on river crossings, which can be dangerous. This trek may not be possible during rainy months (June - September). Please check ahead for availability.

What to Bring

Please be prepared to walk through bushes and streams. It is recommended that you wear long pants and a shirt (dark colors preferable) that covers your shoulders. Carry your valuables in a plastic bag to protect them from water during the canoe ride. Bring one change of clothes, sandals for the village, good shoes for hiking, mosquito repellent, a flashlight (no electricity in the village), sunscreen and a hat (the sun is hot during the day). Women should bring a sarong for public bathing. Blankets, mosquito nets, food and boiled water are provided in the village.

Details

This trek is remote (approximately 80 km south of Pakse) and requires the assistance of a tour company and a certified guide. For more information visit the Visitor Information Centre in Pakse (+856-31-212 021) or the Visitor Information Centre in Champassak District (on the way to Vat Phou). To book a trip in advance contact a major tour company in Laos.



Relaxing on the trail during the early morning nature walk



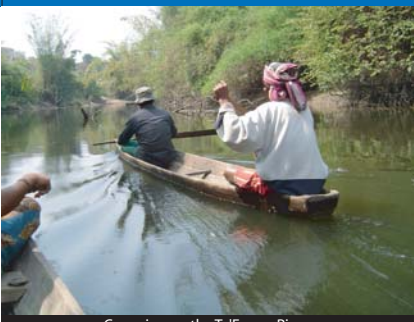
Be prepared for adventure



View of the forest on the way to Ban Ta Ong

This trek requires a certified guide to accompany your group

This trek is designed to support indigenous cultures and nature conservation by generating income for both local communities and the national protected area.



Canoeing on the Ta'Euang River



A village guide drinking water from a vine