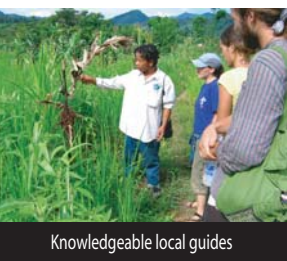


# Introduction to Phou Sam Yord Journey

This fascinating three or four day trek passes through the rich natural and cultural landscape of Phou Sam Yord (Three Peak Mountain). Visit three ethnic groups along the way - Hmong, Khmu and Lanten - staying in traditional lodging and enjoying local food.



Visit a Lanten traditional village



Knowledgeable local guides

With interpretation from your local guides you will learn about indigenous uses of forest products and traditional agricultural systems. During the trek you will also enjoy fantastic views of Luang Namtha Valley.

## The Guides

On your trek you will be led by certified local guides. These men and women are knowledgeable locals with a great respect for the natural and cultural features of Luang Namtha and the Nam Ha National Protected Area. Be sure to ask them questions about the environment you are trekking through, help them practice their English, and consult them if you have any questions about village or forest protocol.

## Do's and Don'ts



### THESE REQUESTS COME DIRECTLY FROM THE VILLAGERS

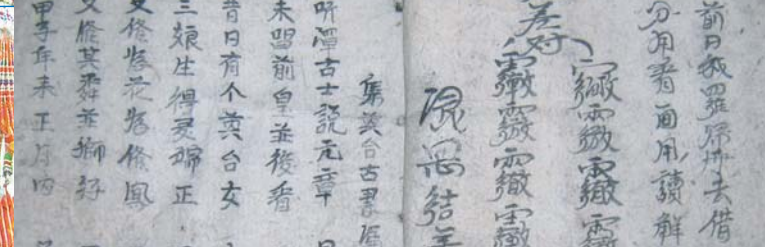
#### Do's and Don'ts on the Trek

- **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 in the 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 all 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.



## Phou Sam Yord Journey

3 - 4 day forest trekking in Luang Namtha



# Itinerary

## Day One: Ban Kokmee to Ban Sam Yord (4-5 hours, moderate-difficult)



Rest stop on the trail

After a short drive from Luang Namtha town, the trail begins at Ban Kokmee, a village of mixed ethnicity, with people from Sida, Lanten, Khmu and Phu Noi backgrounds living together in one village. After leaving Ban Kokmee the trail passes through the village's agricultural land, where you can learn about the various farming techniques used here. Climbing steadily into the hills through a variety of secondary forest vegetation, the view opens up into a panorama of the landscape. Here we stop for a picnic lunch in the shade of a thatched hut.



Ceremonial flowers

After lunch the climb continues through more remote farming regions. The natural vegetation of this area is used in various ways by the local people, and your guides can show you many edible plants and plants with medicinal properties. Learn about cures for stomach pain and headaches, and even a local remedy for diagnosing and treating malaria! Before long the trail enters a beautiful teak forest and then steeply ascends to Ban Sam Yord where trekkers stay in a lodge overlooking the village. The evening can be spent relaxing with the villagers, a valuable opportunity to gain insight into a different culture while exchanging information about contrasting lifestyles.

## Day Two: Ban Sam Yord to Ban Nam Talan (6-7 hours, moderate)



Sam Yord village

The trail on day two ascends to the ridge-top overlooking Ban Sam Yord, and then proceeds to descend steadily through mixed secondary forests that are alive with bird calls and songs. Keep your eyes open for signs of wildlife: squirrels are easily spotted scurrying along branches. Your guides will be able to identify the various scats and tracks of forest animals that you may see. A delicious Lao-style picnic lunch in a secluded hut in the forest will leave you refreshed and rested for the afternoon.



Stream crossing

Continuing downhill, the forest on day two is much older and supports many species of tropical plants. The trail crosses over a cool stream and follows a small rise through bamboo and banana forests. A few steep climbs will leave you breathless before you emerge from the forest at the edge of Ban Nam Talan's rice paddies. At this time in the afternoon, the village children are playing in or walking home through the rice fields, and will be excited to see you and hear you practice your Lao greetings! First you will reach the Lanten section of the village, where the women are easily distinguished in their traditional indigo clothing. Then you carry on to the Khmu part of the village, where you will sleep in a traditional lodge. Enjoy the delicious meal prepared using both Khmu and Lanten traditional recipes.

## Day Three: Ban Nam Talan to Luang Namtha (5 hours, moderate)

Walk through Ban Nam Talan past the local school and indigo plants that the Lanten use to dye their cloth and then be prepared to take off your shoes. Wade through two streams and follow the undulating trail through stunning bamboo and tropical forests. Lunch is eaten on a green ridge top where you will really feel connected to the environment.

The afternoon is a combination of ups and downs and boulder-hopping across numerous small streams and creeks flowing through the bottom of the valley. After walking down a hill with spectacular views of the Namtha valley, arrive in the Khmu village of Ban Sop Sim where a tuk-tuk will be waiting for the return drive to Luang Namtha.



Choose a longer 4 day trek

## Day Four:

This trip can be extended into a three-night, four day trek if you follow the trail from Ban Nam Talan to Ban Nam Kone, another ethnic Lanten village well known for producing high quality bamboo paper and cotton textiles.

## Lanten Paper

The Lanten make a durable paper out of bamboo that was traditionally used to record ancient religious texts and legends. This rough brown parchment is made from bamboo pulp that is thinly spread across a huge sheet of cotton and then dried in the sun. The paper is now made into photo albums, journals and lamp shades, some accented with the Lanten script which is based on Chinese characters.

