

# Our Programme



Tai Lue Weaving

In Vieng Phoukha, trekking and community-based ecotourism began to be developed in late 2003 with the support of local communities and the Luang Namtha Provincial Government. The European Union provided technical and financial assistance to get things started.

The main objectives of developing community-based tourism in this remote and beautiful location are to generate income for local people, support the protection of natural and cultural resources, and to offer visitors the opportunity to experience genuine Lao culture.



Locally guided forest treks

## What's available

The Vieng Phoukha Eco-guide Service offers four different tours/treks. Two one-day tours take you to unique caves and archaeological sights near Vieng Phoukha town. Two longer, overnight treks go to ethnic minority villages in and around the Nam Ha National Protected Area, where simple traditional lodges were especially built to accommodate visitors.

- Akha Trail – 3 day trek
- Khmu and Lahu Trek - 2 day trek
- Phou Mot and Ancient Ruins - 1 day trek
- 1 day Cave and Forest exploration trips

## Do's and Don'ts



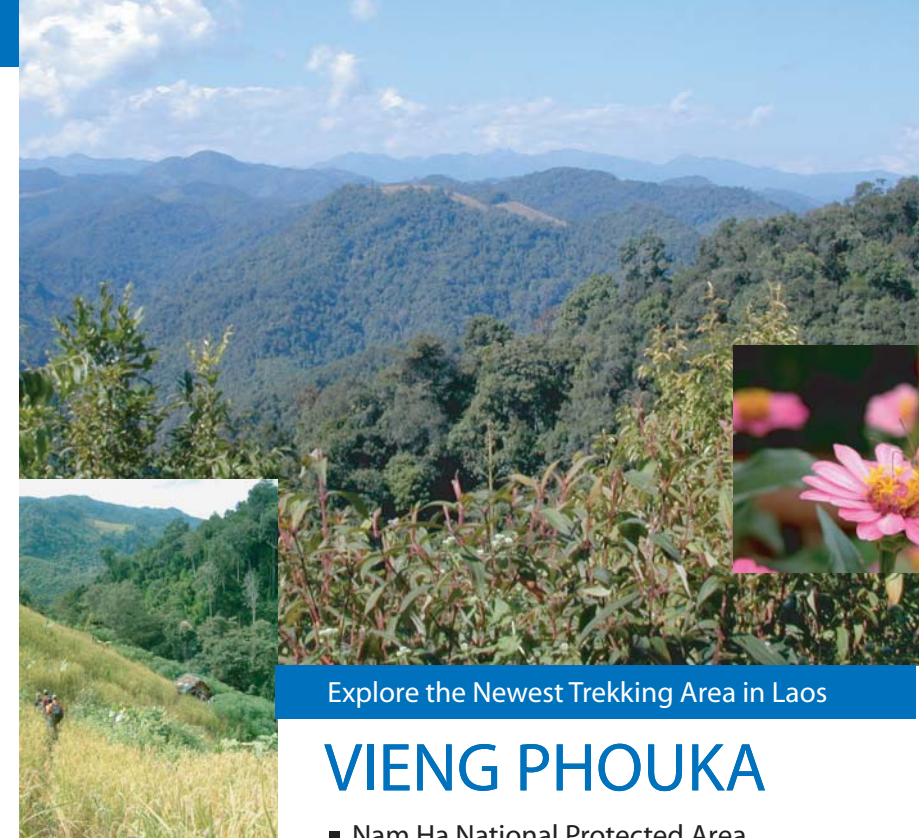
THESE REQUESTS COME DIRECTLY FROM THE VILLAGERS

### 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.

For more information about trekking in Vieng Phoukha, please contact:

Vieng Phoukha Eco-Guide Service, Vieng Phoukha District, Luang Namtha Province, Lao PDR  
Tel/Fax: +856-81-212-400 Email: mpvpk@laotel.com  
[http://www.ecotourismlaos.com/activities/act\\_trekking.htm](http://www.ecotourismlaos.com/activities/act_trekking.htm)



Explore the Newest Trekking Area in Laos

## VIENG PHOUKA

- Nam Ha National Protected Area
- Birds and Wildlife
- Caves and Archaeological Sites



[www.ecotourismlaos.com](http://www.ecotourismlaos.com)



# Vieng Phoukha Highlights

- Overnight Village Stay in Akha, Khmu and Lahu Ethnic Villages
- Limestone Cave Exploration
- Trekking in the Nam Ha National Protected Area
- Ancient Ruins and Archaeological Sites
- See the Production of Traditional Handicrafts and Local Products



Lahu Villagers



Kao Rao Cave



Phou Prasat Caves



Colorful Biodiversity

## Village participation

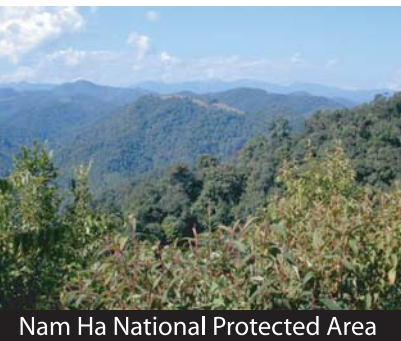
All villages that we visit have invited us to come. Before and after all tours and treks, we speak to villagers about how they feel about having tourists and how they think tourism in their communities can be improved.



Akha Villagers

## Featured Trip: The Akha Trail

This 3-day / 2-night trek ventures into a part of the Nam Ha National Protected Area known to harbor one of the world's last remaining populations of Black Cheek Crested Gibbons. Trekkers will have a chance to hear the Gibbons call in the morning, as well as see/hear other signs of wildlife in the area. The trek is led by local Khmu and Akha guides who teach you about plants found on the trail as well as how to track animals and identify signs of wildlife. Accommodation is in traditional Akha villages high in the mountains. On the final day, the trek includes a visit to the extensive cave system (filled with bats) that honeycombs the Phou Prasat limestone formation.



Nam Ha National Protected Area



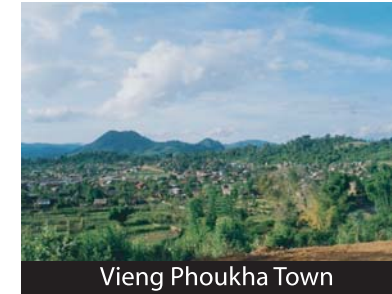
Khmu Family



Hmong New Year in December

## Guides

All treks and tours are run by the Vieng Phoukha Eco-guide Service. Fifteen local guides, mostly from the Khmu ethnic group started training and studying English in 2003 with support from the Lao National Tourism Administration and EU. The guides have a very good understanding of the forest, plants, animals and local cultures. As your guides they will show you medicinal and edible plants, animal tracks, birds, explain about traditional agricultural practices, introduce you to the villages that you visit and ensure that your experience is genuine and rewarding. They will also help to ensure that your trip does not negatively impact local culture or the environment.



Vieng Phoukha Town

## Getting to Vieng Phoukha

Starting at the Lao-Thai border, take a bus or pick-up truck for about 4 hours, travelling north from Houay Xai.

From Luang Namtha town, head south for 3-4 hours by bus or pick-up truck.

It is not necessary to pre-book your trip. All programmes can be arranged by the guide service (located at the district tourism office) when you arrive in Vieng Phoukha.



Vieng Phoukha Visitor Information Centre

## A note about prices

We try to keep prices affordable for travelers while always ensuring reasonable benefits for local people. If we did not employ village guides, purchase all food locally or pay district forest conservation fees, surely prices would be lower, but then so would the quality of your experience.

