

# CHOMPHEK TREK



This two day trek in the hills of Chomphet district, across the Mekong from Luang Prabang offers great variety: green forests, challenging climbs, swimming and an overnight stay in a Hmong village.

## Day 1

The trek starts in **Moungkham**, a village in Chomphet where villagers produce **Kai Paen**, a savory snack made from fresh water weed. The trek then continues for 2 hours along a forested trail to **Huaypong**, a **Khmu** village and lunch by a stream just beyond.

After lunch the trek starts a long uphill climb, ascending to a ridge with **sweeping views** across the valleys around Luang Prabang. The trek continues along the ridge, arriving in the **Hmong** village, **Phuluang Tai** later in the afternoon.

Visitors can relax and bathe in the **springs** nearby while villagers prepare an evening meal and afterwards enjoy a traditional **Hmong music** performance or buy **textiles**. Guests stay overnight in the Hmong style lodge built and managed by the community.

## Day 2

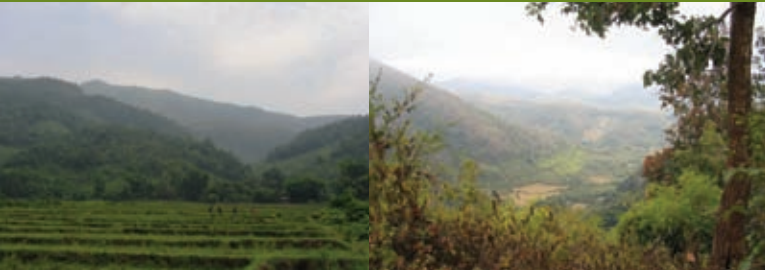
After breakfast the trek makes an early start with a steep descent to **Ban Som**, a picturesque **Lao Loum** village surrounded by rice paddies and mountains. After a break,

trekkers can leave their bags in Ban Som while a village guide leads them on a short hike to **Tam Nang Anh**, a nearby cave and the opportunity to swim by a waterfall close by. Trekkers return to Ban Som for lunch before making the final 3 hour hike back to Ban Moungkham and the boat to Luang Prabang.

## Who are the Khmu, Hmong and Lao Loum?

The Lao Loum, Khmu, and Hmong are the three largest ethnic groups in Luang Prabang province. The **Lao Loum** are lowland dwellers, cultivating paddy rice, fishing, and tending vegetable gardens. In **Ban Som**, a small stream is filled with fresh watercress; when in season, this nutritious vegetable is picked just before your meal for soups and salads. The **Khmu** are famous for their bamboo and rattan weaving skills. In **Ban Houaypong**, baskets, musical instruments, and toys are all expertly fashioned out of natural products and on sale in their community sala. The **Hmong**, traditionally residing on mountaintops and cultivating upland white rice, are a proud and distinct ethnic group. Older people in particular will still wear their traditional black wide legged trousers and shirts accented with bands of colour and embroidery at the wrist and collar.

This trek can be arranged by the Luang Prabang Provincial Tourism Department. For more information please contact staff at the Tourist Information Center, opposite the Ethnic Handicraft Market or call 071 212 487.



## Trekking in Luang Prabang Province

# CHOMPHET 2 DAY TREK

### Level of difficulty and safety

Moderate-Difficult: Steep climbs make this trail challenging. Trekkers must be in good physical shape.

### What to bring

One change of clothes, good shoes, sandals, a sarong for bathing (for women), mosquito repellent, flashlight, hat or sunscreen, camera and money to buy handicrafts.

### Village meal

A typical meal includes chicken, soup, sticky rice, vegetables and chilli. Vegetarian food is available upon request.

### Do's and Don'ts for cultural sensitivity

- Please dress modestly and wear shirts that cover the shoulders and pants that cover your knees. Shirts with a low neck line are not appropriate.
- Please respect local traditions when visiting a village. Do not touch anything that may have religious significance such as buddha statues, altars or burial grounds. Please take off your hat and shoes when entering temples.
- Please ask people before taking their photograph.
- Please do not bathe nude in public.
- Please do not give anything to children as this encourages begging.
- Please respect the environment. Do not litter. Please do not buy wildlife or wildlife products.
- Please support local producers by buying new handicrafts. Do not buy antiques or family heirlooms.
- Please avoid drugs. Drug tourism does damage and sets a bad example for Lao youth.

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