

KHUANG SI TREK



This short trek provides an alternative route to Khuang Si waterfall. The hike begins in a Hmong village, passes through rice fields and ascends forested slopes before arriving at one of the springs that feed the waterfall.

The trek starts with a visit to **Long Lao** which is situated about 30 kilometers west of Luang Prabang. The village is home to a community of **Hmong and Khmu** families from across Luang Prabang Province, who settled there after the Indochina war.

Visitors are welcome and the villagers are happy to arrange **guides** for the trek as well as a typical **village style lunch**. At their community sala there is an exhibition of traditional **Hmong handicrafts**.

The trek leaves Long Lao along a village trail, through vegetable gardens and rice fields before climbing the steep forested slopes that lead to **Tham Pa**. This small cave was used by the previous inhabitants of Long Lao as a bomb shelter.

The trail continues through **protected forest** containing hard wood trees such as Rosewood and Ebony and inhabited by various birds, deer and wild cats before arriving at the springs that feed **Khuang Si Waterfall**. Steps descend the limestone cliff to the bottom of the waterfall and the opportunity to **swim** in the cool turquoise pools there - a refreshing end to the trek!

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.

The Hmong of Long Lao

The Hmong ethnic group originated from Tibet and Mongolia and arrived in Laos in the early 19th century. They live and work in upland areas, mostly in the northern provinces. The Hmong in Long Lao belong to a subgroup known as the **White Hmong**. They speak a Hmong dialect and are animists, worshiping the spirits of their ancestors and their environment. They often wear black with coloured bands around the wrist and collar. The women are known for their brightly coloured embroidered textiles. Like most Hmong, the people of Long Lao are expert farmers, raising livestock and growing rice and other crops on the steep hillsides beyond the village.

The Hmong traditionally eat white rice rather than sticky rice and their upland varieties are regarded as having a good flavour and fetch high prices in local markets.





Trekking in Luang Prabang Province

LONG LAO to KHUANG SI

Level of Difficulty and safety

This trek is easy-moderate with steep climbs in parts. Trekkers must be in good physical shape.

What to bring

Good shoes, sandals, a sarong for bathing (for women), mosquito repellent, flashlight, hat or sunscreen, camera and money to buy handicrafts.

Village style lunch

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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