

# LAOS TRIP NOTES

Laos, officially the Lao People's Democratic Republic, is the only land locked country in SE Asia. Mostly mountainous, Laos is bordered by Myanmar and China to the northwest, by Vietnam to the east, by Cambodia to the south, and by Thailand to the west.

Laos is authentic, in the friendliness of the people, the flavors of the food and the antiquities. The adventuresome can explore river caves and ride rapids. Natural history lovers can trek through pristine forests still home to rare species. Foodies can practice clean eating to their hearts – and stomachs – content, and lovers of Gallic cuisine will be delighted to find some of France's accomplished chefs live and work here. Bakeries are... magnifique.

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

US citizens require a tourist visa, which is available on arrival for 50usd, and permits a stay of up to 30 days.

## MEDICATIONS & INNOCULATIONS

There are no required shots or medications for travelers arriving from the US into Laos, however malaria is present in Laos and visitors may want to take preventative medications. Please check with your travel clinic for their recommendation based on your personal health history.

## CURRENCY

The official currency of Laos is the Lao or Laotian Kip. The currency code for Kips is LAK, and the currency symbol is ₭.

A convenient currency converter can be found at <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>

## CREDIT CARDS

Laos is largely a cash economy. USD is accepted but Kip is preferred. Visa and Mastercard are accepted at major hotels, American Express less so. ATMs are available. Cash is needed for shopping at street markets and restaurants.



## **TIME DIFFERENCE**

Laos is 12 hours ahead of US Eastern Standard Time and 15 hours ahead of US Pacific Standard Time.

## **SHOPPING**

Hill-tribe silks, arts, crafts, home-furnishings, jeweler and couture quality textiles are popular items to buy. Lao women wear the traditional phaa sin - a wraparound skirt. The phaa sin is worn with a silver belt. A vast choice of phaa sin, shawls, bags and jewelry can be found in the morning market and around Vientiane. As well as traditional Lao weavings, you will find hill-tribe embroidery, wall hangings and quilts.

## **ELECTRICITY**

Laos operates on 230 volts, 50 hertz and requires plug type A, B, C, E or F. For more information on plugs and voltage, please visit <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/>

## **LANGUAGE**

The official language of Laos is Lao. English is spoken in the tourist sector.

## **CLIMATE**

Laos' climate is mostly tropical savanna and influenced by the monsoon pattern. There is a distinct rainy season from May to October, followed by a dry season from November to April.

## **TIPPING GUIDELINES**

Tipping is not traditional in Laos but an increase in tourism has led to expectations. Tipping is not expected in taxis or hotels, unless you are given exceptional service. In high end western restaurants and bars, you may be expected to tip unless a service charge is included on your bill. 10% is recommended.

Your guide will appreciate a \$5 tip per day.

## **ETIQUETTE**

One should not touch a person's head nor should one point his or her foot at a person or a scared object, put their feet on tables or chairs and touch or point at anyone with their feet.

When giving an object to someone you should use two hands or the right hand.

Books and written material are treated with great reverence and should never be placed on the floor or slid across a table.

A formal greeting for most Lao people is the "Nop" (joining one's hands together in a praying gesture at chin level). Handshakes are commonly used with foreign visitors.

This information is provided by Asia Answers as a guideline to the country you will be visiting, and is up to date to the best of our knowledge. Further information is available to you at this website - <https://www.travelchina.org.cn/en/index/index.shtml>