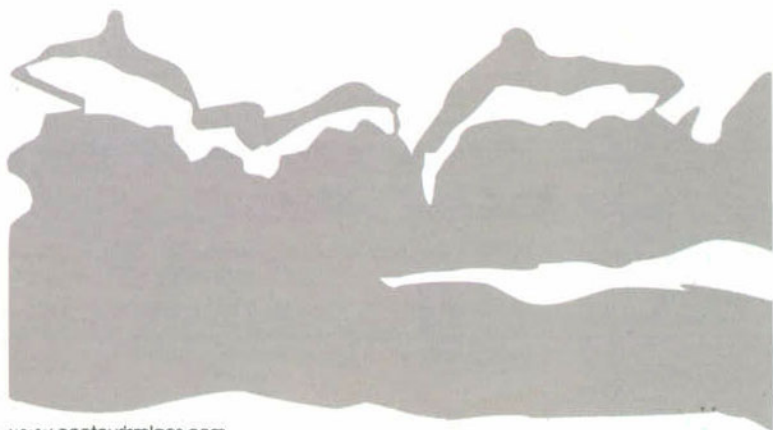


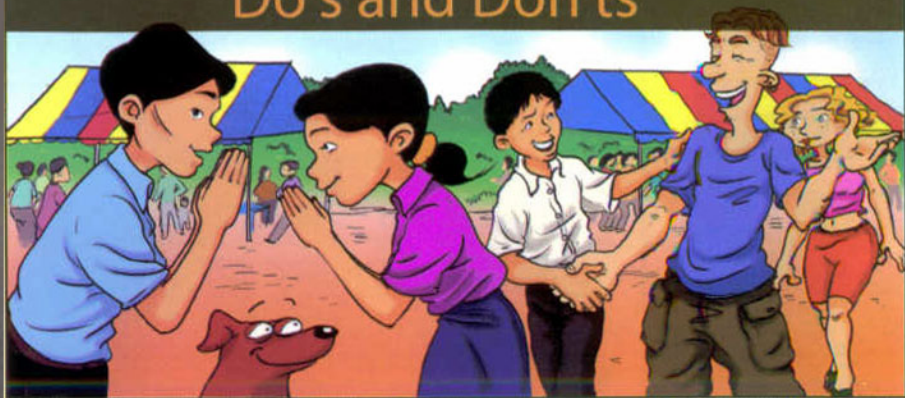


KHONG MOUNTAIN

Ban Maisingsamphan ■ Don Kho ■ Ban Saphai



Do's and Don'ts



THESE REQUESTS COME DIRECTLY FROM THE VILLAGERS

On the Trail

- Stay in a group while walking
- Always follow the guide's advice
- Ask before you take a photo
- Do not climb on "Hin Khong" (Fish Basket Rock) or "Hin Tao" (Turtle Rock)
- Do not destroy or move the "Silachalerk" (Inscription Stone) or "Hin Lakhone" (Swiveling Stone)
- Do not cut down trees, start bushfires or destroy wildlife
- Do not take fruits or other forest products without permission
- Do not litter
- Do not excrete near watercourses

In the Village

- Respect the traditions of the local villagers
- Sleep in the place that your host prepares for you and follow their directions
- Keep your belongings neatly together to prevent from losing them
- Ask before you take photos
- Do not bathe nude when in public
- Do not go into the host's bedroom or the sacred room in the house
- Do not sleep with people of opposite sex unless it is your spouse
- Do not hang your laundry inside the house or in front of the house
- Do not sit on pillows (if they are intended for resting the head)
- Do not make loud noise late at night
- Do not take drugs
- Do not eat wildlife
- Do not give money, medicine or presents to the villagers (especially children)
If you have any gifts to give to the villagers, go through your guide and the village chief
- Do not hug and kiss in public or in the temple



LNTA-ADB
International Development Cooperation
Mekong Tourism Development Project

Ban Saphai

The age of Ban Saphai is unknown but the remnants of Vat Phou era stones indicate that people inhabited the area hundreds of years ago. Ban Saphai, historically Champasak's weaving capitol and largest producer of traditional Lao skirts (sin) is today the center of trade in Lao skirts and textiles in the region. Many nearby villages send their weavings to Ban Saphai traders who sell the products at the Talat Sao (morning market) in Vientiane and foreign markets abroad. To see traditional weaving visit the house of Mae Souvali.

Vat Saphai Kang, an old temple that was last reconstructed in 1938, has a venerated, stupa-like stone (Pa That) from the Vat Phou era that marks the temple as the most sacred in the area. It is the first temple to open all religious festivals in the village.

Across the street from Vat Saphai Kang is a traditional southern Lao house in twin-roof style (luuk fete), which was originally built approximately 150 years ago by Pau Tao Jume, a coffee plantation owner. Please be respectful and do not disturb the family that inhabits the house.

Vat Posay is famous for the Pa Si Ho, a sacred rock that was discovered in 1962 underneath a large tree on the grounds of the temple. To those who pay their respects to the Pa Si Ho comes good luck and strong health; to those who curse or disturb the rock comes sickness or even loss of speech. Please show your respect by wearing proper attire (cover legs and upper body) and remember to remove your shoes before entering the temple. Also of note are the ancient, carved rocks believed to have emerged from the ground on their own.

Ban Mai Singsamphan & Surroundings

The area of Ban Mai Singsamphan was originally called Nakhon Sing (Lion District), part of Hadtaboun District, Sedone Province, and was left idle and unoccupied until 1969, when Mr. Chan Nou Ton Thong Kham, a farmer from Muang Kong Sedone in Salavan Province, received permission to plant rice, cotton and tobacco in the area, becoming the village's first permanent resident. Shortly after that, the village was populated by people from many surrounding villages and districts and was later renamed Ban Mai Singsamphan, meaning 'New Lion Village of Solidarity', as the village is now comprised of people from many different villages, living together in peace and harmony.

Market

Opened in 1987 this market is one of Ban Mai's main attractions and is a major trading center in the area. There is an excellent variety of non-timber forest products (especially wild orchids), local whiskeys, Lao textiles and a host of other products on sale. Open 6am - 6pm daily.

Nakhon Sing

In 1967, this area, referred to as Nakhon Sing, began being used as a military training post and still has the remains of an old temple, a helicopter landing area, and military training facilities. There is also a statue of the Nakhon Sing lion-the village's symbol-and two statues of Nyak guards which protect the village from evil.



Traditional weaving pattern



Pa That at Vat Saphai Kang



Home in Ban Saphai



Pa Si Ho at Vat Posay



Taking the boat to Ban Mai Singsamphan



Ban Mai Singsamphan Market



Nakhon Sing Lion

MEKONG MAP



Phou Xieng Thong National Protected Area

Ban Mai Singsamphan is located inside the Phou Xieng Thong National Protected Area, which covers 1,200 km² over two provinces, Salavan and Champassak. Key species living in this predominantly semi-evergreen forest are banteng, leopard and green peafowl. The protected area is also well-known for its diverse species of orchids.

Hin Khong (Fish Basket Rock)

The legend of Hin Khong, a large rock that resembles a fish basket perched atop Khong mountain, is that Pou Peum, a giant who lived in the area ages ago, found a crab nearby in the Mekong (present day Kong Sedone District) and placed it in the basket for safe keeping while he kept on his daily work. Please do not climb on the rock.



Collecting wild mushrooms on Phou Khong mountain

Dan Xang Tai (Dead Elephant Plateau)

Khong mountain used to have large herds of wild elephants but according to villagers, in 1970 the herds fled the area after one elephant was shot dead by a military infantryman stationed in Ban Mai. The area where the elephant was killed is called Dan Xang Tai.



Hin Khong (Fish Basket Rock)

Hin Hong (Swan Rock)/Hin Tao (Turtle Rock)

This large rock, which resembles a turtle, is referred to as both Hin Tao (Turtle Rock) and Hin Hong (Swan Rock). The tale of the turtle holds that he was once in need of help, stuck in a dry pond, when two swans descended to help him. The turtle grasped a stick in his mouth and the two swans, holding either ends of the stick in their talons, began to fly the turtle to a new, water-filled pond. A group of children below saw the turtle being carried by the two swans above and yelled "Look, the swans are carrying the turtle!" The turtle, too proud to admit that he needed help, retorted "No, I'm carrying the swans." But to his embarrassment and demise, at the instant he opened his mouth to speak, the turtle fell to the ground, and there he still remains today.



Hin Tao (Turtle Rock)

Ban Soula

Upriver from Ban Mai Singsamphan is Ban Soula, known for its rock footprint of Buddha (Hoy Pabat), which brings protection and good health to the village. Villagers believe that they were successfully able to carry the Hoy Pabat to the village from the Mekong where it was found due to the fact that they used the joint strength of both men and women. All those who tried to lift the rock before had failed because they used only the strength of men! Also at Ban Soula are some impressive cliffs, which stand opposite of Pa Taem in Thailand.



Cliffs of Pu Pabat near Ban Soula

Stone Tablet & Stone Linga

Located on the high plateau of Phou Khong (Khong mountain) are two ancient stone artifacts. The Stone Tablet (Silachaleuk) is engraved using the same Sanskrit language used in Vat Phou etchings. Next to the tablet is a cylindrical stone broken at the base, known as the "Swiveling Stone", which looks to be a lingam. There are similar stone pieces dating from the same period located across the Mekong in Kongjiam District, Thailand.



The ancient Stone Tablet (Silachaleuk)

Dan Pa Peung & Nun Footprints

The flat rocky landscape leading up to the Bee Cliff is known as Dan Pa Peung and is a special site with its sacred rock footprints of Buddhist nuns.



SANASOMBOUN DISTRICT TOURISM ATTRACTIONS

Vat Po Sayalam (Ban Simoungkoun)

Vat Po Sayalam is named after the Pipal tree in the center of the grounds, which is said to have grown on its own (without being planted) after the respected monk, Ajaan Somdeth Lun was cremated at the site in 1921. The temple was later erected in tribute to the lasting spirit of the great monk. The forested area surrounding the temple was settled after the construction of the temple and is now known as Ban Simoungkoun. Villagers still believe that the spirit of the Ajaan Somdeth Lun protects the area. Please remove your shoes before entering the worship area. You may also make a donation if you wish.



Vat Po Sayalam

Ban Nakeo

Convenient boat landing for taking boats to Ban Vernxay or north to Ban Mai Singsamphan.

Ban Boung Kha

Boats are available from here to Ban Mai Singsamphan.

Don Ko

According to the Don Ko villagers, the island was originally settled by a small group of families from Attapeu hundreds of years ago. During the French colonial period in the late 1800's, Don Ko became the first center of political administration in Champassak Province, preceding Pakse, due to its safe and convenient location for docking French military boats that traveled up and down the Mekong river regularly. During this ten year period the island was referred to as Muang Don Ko Gavin and was ruled by three different governors-all Laotian. The last governor, Udon Sinbandith from Don Ko, died in 1982. Although the original buildings of the provincial center are no longer standing, some remains can be found, such as the posts of the old buildings which are now used to support present-day houses. Two traditional-style houses are still standing: There is the former house of a wealthy trader named Pau Tao Kud Khun Mi which was built over one hundred years ago and features a giant, woven fish trap underneath. And there is the seventy-year-old twin roof house (luuk fete), which has been maintained in excellent condition. Of more recent history is the site of the house of Mr. Phillipe, a foreigner who lived on the island during the late 1960's/early 1970's, working with the island's silk weavers. Legend has it that the good-natured foreigner, who spoke Lao fluently, kept fit by swimming laps around the island.

Don Ko is known for its traditional weavings, which can be purchased directly from the producers themselves. Homestays are available on the island and include homemade food and a tour of the island's attractions.



Old house on Don Kho



Silk weaving on Don Kho island

Pa Peung (Bee Cliff)

This cliff and cave (40-50 metres high) is named after the many bee hives that hung on the cliff many years ago. Today there are still bee hives present but not as many as before. Pa Peung is also a religious site and is home to some Buddhist nuns, who have lived there since 2003. The nuns ask that visitors wear non-red clothing, do not speak lies, and do not kill or damage anything in the area. Please show your respect and do not disturb them.



Pa Peung (Bee cliff)

Dan Teuk

This area has a variety of orchid species and is an orchid conservation area managed by the villagers. This site is also known for its excellent view.

Pan Pak Kood

This rocky area has an abundance of the edible fern, Pak Kood, which likes to grow on cliffs or around rocks.

Pan Pak Waan

This area has a lot of the sweet leafy forest green Pak Waan. The leaves and flowers of the Pak Waan tree are a unique product used in local foods, especially bamboo soup.



Wild orchid in the village orchid conservation area

Ban Maisingsamphan MAP

Ubon Ratchathani Province
Thailand

