

Homestays:

Ban Thongxam village is the launch village for the Houay Hok stream trekking. A home-stay option is being created in this Yooy ethnic village.



Staying in Lankhang:

For those who would prefer guesthouse accommodation Lankhang offers a variety of options.

Sai Phou Louang Resort and Bungalows :

(030 9158000): Located 1.2 km west of road junction (road to Gnommalath)

Sabaidee Naphao Motel :

(020 5741441) Look for big bomb sign 1.4km from road junction towards Naphao border gates.

Khounpanya Guesthouse :

(020 55851409) near market, 250m from road junction

Derm Lerm Guesthouse :

(030 9171066) 140m from road junction towards Naphao border gates.

Lankhang Restaurants:

A number of both Lao restaurants and Vietnamese noodle shops are in Lankhang. In the restaurants if there is no menu there are usually pictures displayed to assist your selection.

Village Guide Service:

Please note that these treks and cave tours are facilitated by village guides, so foreign visitors please be aware that languages will be limited, and non-verbal communication will be paramount.

Dos and Don'ts when trekking or caving:

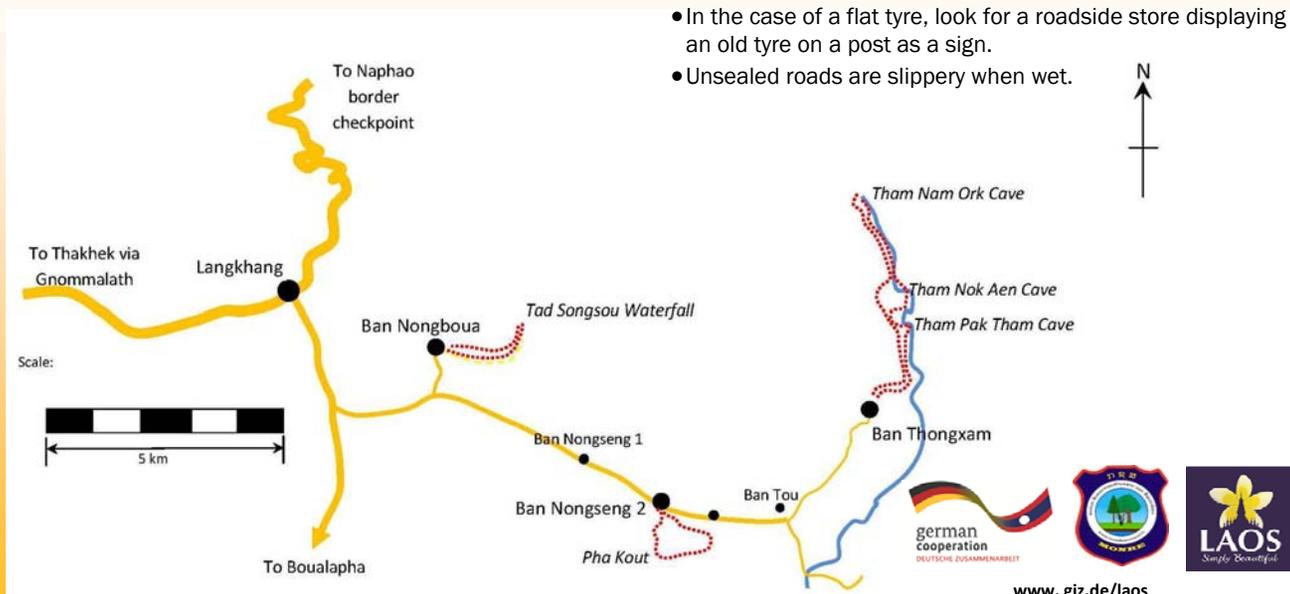
- Village guides essential for entering caves, going to cliffs and waterfalls.
- Strictly no taking souvenirs from caves.
- Please bring your own torch as back-up in caves.
- Make sure you don't float through Tham Nok Aen cave tunnel when a villager is fishing with nets.
- Small groups moving slowly and silently in early morning are more likely to encounter wildlife.
- No nude swimming/bathing.

Getting there:

- Lankhang is about 128km from Thakhek; or from Vietnam, 12km from Naphao Border checkpoint. To get to Lankhang travel East from Thakhek along Route 12 for 55km, then turn right at Gnommalath and continue along route 12 for 73km.
- To get to the suggested villages turn south at Lankhang; and travel 2.8km before turning left into the feeder road.
- Distances from Lankhang; Ban Nongboua = 6.4; Ban Nongseng = 10km; Ban Thongxam = 15.6km(12.6km to Ban Dou, then left for 3km).

Tips for Motorbike Hiring:

- Make sure it is roadworthy (check brakes, lights, oil etc) before you hire.
- Wear helmet. Speed kills
- Make sure you practice before starting your journey
- Avoid riding 2 people per bike if possible.
- If you have to cross a river; villagers with a boat will take you across for a small fee (recommended to pay an extra villager to balance your bike on the boat while crossing.
- In the case of a flat tyre, look for a roadside store displaying an old tyre on a post as a sign.
- Unsealed roads are slippery when wet.



Nature trails in Hin Nam No



Eco-Tourism Adventures in Hin Nam No
National Protected Area

Khammouane Province

Hin Nam No National Protected Area:

As its name suggests, Hin Nam No (*thorny rock sprouts*) is an area of jagged limestone karst landscape where the Central Indochina Limestone belt meets the Annamite mountain chain. The Hin Nam No National Protected Area lies in Boualapha District, Khammouane Province. Roughly 170km east of Thakhek and covers an area of 82,000 ha. For most of the Hin Nam No, the habitat is characterized by vertical limestone cliffs, deep jungle gorges and a mosaic of caves and a number of waterfalls.



Wildlife:

The rugged limestone country has served as a refuge for several key species of primates, in particular, the endangered black langur (*Trachipitecus laotum ebenus*) and red-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*). Other primates are present



such as southern white-cheeked crested gibbon, and multiple species of macaque making this area, a priority primate protection site. Further notable species contributing to the conservation value of the area are four species of hornbill birds; among these, the great hornbill and the wreathed hornbill. Another bird, the sooty babbler (*Stachyris herberti*) is of interest to bird specialists as it inhabits only the Indochinese limestone landscapes. Traditionally, villagers surrounding the protected area have hunted some of these animals but are now protecting wildlife and invite you to visit to experience the habitats, detect signs of these rare creatures and even see and hear the animals themselves.

Must See Hin Nam No Sites:

Tham Nam Ork Cave

The resurgence of the Houay Hok stream. This large chamber is kept clean by seasonal inundation. The cave is reached by a 6km walk up stream from Ban Thongxam village. Otter tracks are often seen at the mouth of this cave, and a strange boulder ceiling can be investigated inside the cave. Keep quiet as you walk to this cave because you may be fortunate enough to encounter a family of black langurs either morning or evening high on a cliff-face overlooking the walking track.



Tham Nok Aen Cave

The Houay Hok stream has cut a path through a limestone outcrop for about 60m. In this tunnel there is a beach and a constant flow of water at a depth of about 1.5m in the stream allows for swimming through the cave for those willing to face the cold and dark. Bats and swallows nest in this cave as indicated by



the name “*nok aen*” (swallow). There are passages on the left hand side. One large cavern is lit by a sky-window where villagers say that this cave was inhabited by about 3000 North Vietnamese soldiers during the war. There is evidence of this occupation from the tin cans, and even a toothbrush from the war-time era. Please preserve the historical value of this cave by not taking souvenirs.

Tham Pak Tham

This cave is the third tunnel that the Houay Hok cuts through. The mouth of the cave is located 2.7km upstream from Ban Thongxam village. It's not known how deep the pool at the mouth of the cave is.



Tad Songsou

A 20m waterfall with a deep pool at its base located 2.2km from Ban Nongboua. During the dry season there is usually still some water flow and is suitable for a refreshing swim after a guided walk from the village.

Pha Koud Macaques

Assamese macaques live only about 800m south of Ban Nongseng. These primates live in caves on Pha Koud cliff. It is unknown how they get their water; perhaps deep in a cave. They do come down to the foot of the cliff to eat the fresh vegetative shoots. Paying a village guide to take you to see them early in the morning or in the evening provides further incentives for conserving the remaining forest at the base of the cliffs.



Trekking Itineraries:

Ban Thongxam Village:

1. **Houay Hok Long Trail.** This one day trek generally follows the stream and over a sandstone ridge, to the resurgence cave of Houay Hok stream (Nam Ork Cave). Look out for black langurs on the cliffs overlooking the path. After eating lunch resume downstream to walk through Tham Nok Aen cave tunnel, then further downstream to the Tham Pak Tham cave, then back to Ban Thongxam (**total length 12km, duration 7.5 hours**)
2. **Houay Hok Short Trail.** This trek follows Houay Hok stream up to Tham Nok Aen tunnel, then further downstream to the Tham Pak Tham then back to Ban Thongxam (**total length 6.5km, duration 3.5 hours**).

Ban Nongseng Village:

Macaque spotting at Pha Koud

A short walk to the cliff from the village in the early morning or evening. Binoculars are preferable for viewing macaque (**total length 2km duration 1 hour**). It may be possible to arrange an extended trek around the base of Pha Koud, for an extra fee.

Ban Nongboua Village:

Tad Songsou waterfall. This 2.2km walk or tractor ride takes you to a cool waterfall swimming pool at the base of Phou Cheuang Mountain.

Operating months:

Dry season Only

Ban Thongxam treks are closed between June and October. Due to road conditions and stream volume.

Year Round

Short treks from Ban Nongboua (Tad Songsou waterfall) and Ban Nongseng (Macaque spotting at Pha Koud), may still be arranged in the wet season.