



EVENTS & FESTIVAL in 2012

February

■ Elephant Festival Sayabouly

Date | February

Venue | Paklay District, Sayabouly

The event features about 60 brightly adorned pachyderms competing for "Elephant of the Year", along with elephant processions and bathing, mahout demonstrations, traditional Buddhist blessings, fun fairs, night markets, and live performances.



■ Sikhottabong Festival

Date | 07 February (tentative)

Venue | That Sikhottabong, Khammouane

This religious festival is held at Sikhottabong stupa, located about 8km south of Thakhek. A trade fair also held in the festival featured the display and sales of products of more than 130 booths from nine districts of this central province along with goods from neighboring Thailand.



■ Wat Phou Festival

Date | 07 February (tentative)

Venue | Wat Phou, Champasak

Wat phou festival is annually held in the full moon of the 3rd month of lunar calendar, on the grounds of the enchanting pre-Angkorian Wat Phu remains in Champasak. Festivities are elephants racing, buffaloes fighting, cocks fighting and performances of Lao traditional music and dance. The trade fair showcasing the products from the southern province of Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam is also held.



■ Lao Food Festival

Date | End of February

Venue | Vientiane Capital

At the National Cultural Hall in Vientiane ,over 80 booths, mainly from Vientiane Capital, Vientiane (province), Savannakhet, Champassak, Khammouane, Sayaboury, Luang Prabang, Xiengkhouang and Houaphanh, demonstrate and sell food and handicraft items.

March

■ Boun Pha Vet

Date | March

Venue | nationwide

A ceremony of offering donations to have one's future read from a piece of paper drawn, during the three day-three night festival.



April

■ Lao New Year "Boun Pi Mai"

Date | 14-16 Apr

Venue | Luang Prabang and nationwide

The new year celebration is especially beautified and the most colorful parade describing the traditional Lao costumes, music and dance, the procession of the sacred Prabang Buddha image, and the Miss New Year beauty contest will be shown.



May

■ Rocket festival "Boun Bangfai"

Date | May

Venue | Vientiane Province (Phon Huong District) and nationwide

The festival is a call for rain and a celebration of fertility. In the afternoon, people gather in the fields on the outskirts of villages and towns to launch self-made firework rockets. Different communities compete for the best decorated and the highest travelling rocket.



July

■ Boun Khao Pansa (Buddhist lent)

Date | 03 July (tentative)

Venue | Vientiane capital and nationwide

The beginning of the Buddhist lent. During the next three-month period, Monks spend most of their time in prayer and meditation and are restricted from spending nights in other temples.



August

■ Boun Khao Padabdin (Rice Ceremony) & Boat Racing Festival

Date | 16 August (tentative)

Venue | Luang Prabang

People visit to local temples to make offerings to the dead ancestors as well as to share merit-making. This festival includes boat racing on the Nam Khane River and a trade fair in Luang Prabang city.



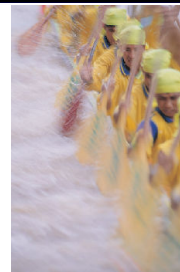
September

■ Boun Awk Phansa (End of Buddhist Lent) & Boat Racing Festival

Date | 30 September (tentative)

Venue | Sayabouly

That marks the end of the monks' three-month-fast and retreat during the rainy season. At dawn, donations and offerings are made at the temples. Prayers are chanted by the monks, and at dusk candlelight processions wind round the temples. Concurrently, hundreds of decorated candlelit-floats, made of paper, are set adrift in the rivers. These carry offerings and incense, transforming the river into a fragrant snake of sparkling.



October

■ Boat Racing Festival in Vientiane

Date | 01 October (tentative)

Venue | Vientiane Capital

On the first day at dawn of Boun Awk Phansa, donations and offerings are made at temples around the city. In the evening, candlelight processions are held around the temples and hundred of colorful floats decorated with flower, incense and candle are set adrift down the Mekong river in thanksgiving to the river spirit. The next day, a popular and exciting boat racing competition is held on the Mekong river.



■ That Luang Festival

Date | 29 October (tentative)

Venue | That Luang, Vientiane Capital

This religious festival is held in and around That Luang stupa, the national symbol of Laos. It is a three-day religious festival celebrated at full moon in November. It begins with pre-dawn gathering of ten thousands of pilgrims from Laos and Thailand at That Luang who listen to prayers and sermons chanted by hundreds of monks representing all Lao wats. The festival ends with a huge fireworks display.



■ Handicrafts Festival

Date | End of October

Venue | ITECC, Vientiane Capital

Over 370 producers have reaffirmed their participation at the International Trade Exhibition and Convention Centre (ITECC). Events of the fest include silk, cotton, rattan, wood, silver, and pottery products as well as Lao traditional foods demonstration, handicraft products contest, fashion show of Lao cloths and Japan Kimono.



November

■ That Inhang Festival

Date | 28 November (tentative)

Venue | That Inhang, Savannakhet

The ritual ceremony is annually performed in the That Ing Hang ("Ing Hang Stupa"), one of the most sacred stupa in Southern Laos.

December

■ Hmong New Year

Date | December

Venue | Vientiane, Oudomxay, Xieng Khouang, Luang Prabang

The Hmong New Year celebration features colorful displays of traditional costumes made from green, red and white silk and ornate silver jewelry. Music from traditional Hmong instruments such as the teun-flute, Hmong-style khene pipe and leave blowing is enjoyed. Other festivities include the Makkhon (cotton-ball) throwing ceremony, ox fighting, spinning-top races and crossbow demonstrations.



For more information, visit our website at <http://www.tourismlaos.org>

Lao National Tourism Administration | September 2011