



Country Profile: Laos

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Laos) is a poor, developing country ruled by an authoritarian, Communist, one-party government. Political power is centralized in the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. Services and facilities for tourists are adequate in the capital, Vientiane, and the UNESCO World Heritage town of Luang Prabang, but are extremely limited in other parts of the country. Read the Department of State [Background Notes](#) on Laos for additional information.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW



Country Name:	Laos
Continent:	Asia
Capital City:	Vientiane
Boundary Countries:	Burma, Cambodia, China, Thailand, Vietnam
Recommended Hospitals in Capital:	
Main Cities:	Vientiane, Luang Phrabang, Savannakhet, Pakse
Country Size:	236,800 sq km
Population:	6,068,117

COUNTRY GENERAL INFORMATION

Language:	Lao (official), French, English, and various ethnic languages
Currency:	Lao Kip (LAK)
Predominant Religions:	Buddhist 67%, Christian 1.5%, other and unspecified 31.5%
National Holidays:	Republic Day, 2 December (1975)
Economic Status:	The government of Laos, one of the few remaining one-party Communist states, began decentralizing control and encouraging private enterprise in 1986.
Security:	Lao People's Armed Forces (LPAF): Lao People's Army (LPA; includes Riverine Force), Air Force
US Presence:	Americans living or traveling in Laos are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the State Department's travel registration web site so that they can obtain updated information on travel and security within Laos. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency. The U.S. Embassy is located on Rue Bartholonie (near Tat Dam), in Vientiane; from the U.S., mail may be addressed to U.S. Embassy Vientiane, Unit 8165, Box V, APO AP 96546; Telephone (856-21) 267-000, recorded emergency information for American citizens (856-21) 267-111; duty officer emergency cellular telephone (856-20) 550-2016; Embassy-wide fax number (856-21) 267-190; Consular Section e-mail: CONSLAO@state.gov, Embassy web site: http://laos.usembassy.gov/ .
Major Airports:	Airports: 46, Airports w/paved runways: 9 Vientiane – Wattay International Airport (VTE/VLVT) Vientiane Airport, Laos, BP 119, c/o Direction Aviation Civile, Vientiane LAOS Tel: +856 (0)2020, +856 (0)2467

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