



amazing
Indi@



I-San Culinary



I-San
C**o**linary

Heart-Dish From heart to dish

I-San Coolinary

Food is more than survival. It is our uniqueness. It tells us our origin, our beliefs and our wisdom heritage from our ancestors through time. Even now, we still write our inspiring stories not with our pen but our food. We proudly recommend exploring an exotic experience of I-San Coolinary.

Introduction

Are you tired of choosing what to eat? I-san food is your solution! With a flavourful and tangy taste of I-san food, you can't get enough of it. We can't argue with the popularity of I-san food not only among Thai people but foreigners too, with evidence of I-san restaurants available all over the country.

I-San food exposes the simple and sufficient life by choosing seasonal ingredients for culinary recipes added up by cool-ish ideas which made "I-San Coolinary" and tells the story from the roots of wisdom to the soft peak of creativity surrounded by diverse kinds of the geographical environment.





Picnic with your close friends or fancy dining with your family or significant others. An I-san meal is always a delightful meal for quality time and brings people closer. A secret of I-San food is every single dish is made from the heart of the people by truly understanding their own culture and characteristic of each seasonal ingredient with the pride of their origin.

You can prove it yourself that I-san is kinda cool!



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A city in the mist, among the mountains and comfy vibes stay throughout the year. There is unique culinary art with hidden points of view through the inherited culinary arts. You will love all the places and feel great with all the dishes.

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Sakon Nakhon – Nakhon Phanom : The land of unique, GI dishes.

Searching for ingredients from their origin, the one and only in Siam. This is the place you will find the most GI foods in Thailand and mysterious lore of Naga. If you like a peaceful place, friendly people and exotic food, this is the number one city of your choice.





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Khon Kaen – Kalasin – Maha sarakham : The intensity of modern I-san.

Nowadays, in this era of change, there are youth who import “Life can be a designed” concept. Here is based on eating a natural diet, living with the arts, and having sufficient and balanced life in the I-San style.



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The strength of culture and volcanic geographical identity creates “the treasure in the field”. Here, we provide happiness through food that is concerned with safety for all consumers, producers and nature.

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Along the Mekong River on the track of a simple lifestyle, “The northernmost place in I-San”, fresh local place with a ton of experiences, are waiting for you to fulfill your soul with the nature and beliefs in Buddhism and Naga.





5 DELICIOUS ROUTES



Loei: The Peak of Flavour

A mountain is always in sight when you're in Loei. You can't glance upward without spotting a breathtaking cliff, hilltop or stunning mountain peak. The province boasts an abundance of natural beauty. Undulating hills emerge from verdant forests, each yielding a distinctive dish with a story. Some stories are rich and breathtaking - others are a simple tale. Loei is a chance to explore. It's a chance to fall in love with every pitstop and a chance to delight in every dish.







Landlocked Dan Sai: Blast from the Past



A trip to Dan Sai district (called “Amphoe” in Thai) brings back memories of the region from a century ago. Here, the ocean is a distant memory, and back then, even freshwater fish, a normally easy source of food, were a rare sight.

It more than makes up for it by its fertile forests and fields, which are home to a diverse range of flora, including Sathon trees (scientific name: *Millettia utilis* and *Millettia leucantha*), whose leaves resemble a gorgeous plume of bird feathers. Thai folk philosopher Khamphan Ornuthai recounted how, when there were too few fish to make fermented fish paste (or Pla Ra), and locals had only salt to season their food, they made do with fermented Sathon leaves. They simmered the juice from the fermented Sathon leaves until they gave off a beautiful aroma. The resulted sauce was a surprisingly good substitute for Pla Ra. The secret? Only leaves harvested during the summer can result in the delicious “Dan Sai umami” flavour. Sathon leaf sauce is utterly distinctive, and it is only produced once a year.

The only way to taste this unique sathon leaf Seasoning is to come to Dan Sai district in Loei. It’s great in miang Khon, which is a leaf-wrapped salad snack served during festivals and holidays. The local way of preparing this dish takes advantage of two curious ingredients: locally grown Thai tomatoes and turkey berries (Thai: Makhuea Phuang). The vegetables are wrapped in either leaves from the false black pepper vine, fig leaves, or wild betel leaves, then seasoned with Sathon leaf sauce. The sweet and salty result gives the local version of Miang Khon a unique taste indeed.

Another must-try dish is kaeng Sua Kai, which makes use of plentiful spicy herbs (similar to Tom Yam) - making it a perfect winter meal. The Sathon leaf paste complements it perfectly, and an additional I-San ingredient, Vietnamese coriander (Thai: Phak Phaeo) kicks the heat up to an even higher notch. It’s so hot that, as a Northeasterner would say, it’s very Suang (invigorating).



Khrua Mae Khamphan Restaurant

is in Dan Sai district, Loei. It is open daily from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. Please reserve in advance at +668-7217-8104, +668-9709-2367.



Sathon leaves aren’t only delicious; they’re also nutritious. Studies show they contain proteins and vitamins that help repair various body parts and boost the immune system. It’s always a good idea to have some Sathon leaf sauce on hand - it amps up the taste of every dish.


Tips & Tricks

- Sathon leaf sauce is only produced in March-April each year.
- Suang means cleansing and invigorating

off a beautiful



The Tai Dam People's Zest for Life

 The other side of town is home to a dish embedded in the Tai Dam ethnic minority's past. The group once lived in an area of Dien Bien Phu in Northern Vietnam. But as Yunnan armies invaded the area repeatedly, they began to emigrate southwards. During the reign of King Rama V the Great (at the turn of the 20th century), Thai armies (then called Siamese) began to push the invaders back, winning campaigns throughout Dien Bien Phu Xiangkhong, Lao PDR. A number of Tai Dam people decided to emigrate to Siamese soil in search of safety.

In 1905, one group settled down in Ban Na Pa Nat in Chiang Khan district, and they've remained there ever since. Their name comes from "tai" (freedom, to signify that they are a free people) and "dam" (black, referencing to their black attire).

Tips & Tricks

Traditional "tractor and trailer" (Thai : I-taek) tours of the community and homestays are available.



With their difficult days behind them, the small group faithfully passed on their traditions and lifestyle. To catch a glimpse of traditional Tai Dam living, it's best to head to the Tai Dam Village Museum, where many Tai Dam beliefs and customs are showcased. They include rites for ancestral and home ghost-spirit worship (Thai: Phi Banphaburut and Phi Ruean, respectively), as well as angelic beings called Thaen or Phi Thaen.

The Tai Dam people are known for their grit and passion for life. As such, most Tai Dam specialties are a simpler affair, like Chaeo Ta Daeng, which is roasted dried chilies and garlic mashed together and seasoned with salt and fermented fish


paste sauce. At first glance, the sauce looks rather ordinary, but the taste is simply addictive.

One must-try dish is Kaeng No Som: pickled tender bamboo shoots in a chicken soup, seasoned with green onion shoots, lemongrass, salt, and other herbs.

The soothing, sweet and umami taste of this soup is a consequence of the local version of the pickled bamboo shoots, preserved with steamed sticky rice, which is salty rather than sour. Salt and chili are essential condiments for this dish.

Gt Bon or Bon Soup as well as Chup Phak (English : vegetable soup) are also absolute musts.



 **Tai Dam Village Museum**
is located at Ban Na Pa Nad, Khao Kaeo sub-district, Chiang Khan district, Loei province. It is open every day from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Tel. +668-3332-2828. To watch any performances, demonstrations or to try the cuisine, please contact the Museum in advance.



Safety and Fortune in the Air



A Tai Dam home and ritual spaces are ornamented with a type of sacred hanging ornament called Tum Nok Tum Nu. The colourful hangings dispel bad luck and attract good fortune, and each type is imbued with various meanings. The Ban hanging is home to the widely-respected ghost-spirit, Phi Mot. Tum Nu is a drum used to summon courage during a battle. Tum Nok symbolises birds (nok is bird in Thai), called to peck out the eyes of any enemies. Rang To Rang Taen calls forth wasps and hornets (wasps and hornets in Thai are To and Taen) to also attack enemies. Huachai Thai Dam symbolises the love and unity of the Tai Dam people. The hanging charms are a lovely souvenir from the region.



Café De Mena

is located in Phuruarounmai Resort (with 13 rooms) in Nong Bua subdistrict, Phu Ruea district in Loei province. It is open every day from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. For more information call +66-4289-9096, +668-1954-2915.

Going from Slopes to Paddy Fields

Though Loei is often described as “an ocean of mountains”, rice paddies proliferate in the flatter lands near the rivers and on hillsides, making them perfect stopping points from which to enjoy inviting views.

Café De Mena : Waving fields of organic rice stalks and a pesticide-free vegetable garden are the source of the dishes served in this café. Their food is served in a stylish Thai-style layered bento box (Thai: Pinto). Try chayote leaf fried with egg or spicy cage-free chicken Tom Som Kai Ban spicy soup. Better yet, try Yam Phak Kut spicy salad, as well as shiitake mushroom, served in the Lap style (minced and intensely flavoured). The dishes are served with five types of rice, each a different colour: dark purple Sang Yot “rice berry” rice, Japanese rice, rice steamed with blue butterfly pea flower water green pandan leaf-infused rice, and golden yellow safflower rice.



Tips & Tricks

Visitors in May can enjoy nighttime paddy field views filled with glimmering fireflies. In June, dishes feature paddy field freshwater crabs and molluscs.

Na Rao Kwang Restaurant : Expansive fields stretch out beyond this restaurant, which offers many private little nooks. A creative menu designed for relaxation includes rose lemon tea with honey, light snacks, and afternoon tea sets (served with desserts). The panoramic views are a heart-warming showcase of the area's rice paddies and mountains.




Na Rao Kwang Restaurant

is located in Na An subdistrict, Mueang district in Loei province. It is open every day from 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. (except for Mondays).
Tel. +669-3442-2539,
+668-9199-6459



From the Heart

 True fans of Loei head to these eateries, which embrace the variety of local traditions in cuisine. The creative offerings are perfect for visitors who love to explore, and are proven to satisfy.

Loei Tam Loei Restaurant : Owner Kalaya “Poom” Srithadchantha is a Loei “repat” who decided to return to her hometown for a simpler life near her family. She serves healthy food using chemical-free produce, beautifully presented with edible flowers and MSG-free dressings and dips. Be sure to try the mysterious colour-changing butterfly pea flower drink.



Loei Tam Loei Restaurant

is located on Loei-Na Duang Road in Kut Pong sub-district, Mueang Loei district, Loei province. It's open weekdays 11.30 a.m. - 9.30 p.m. (snacks and beverages served 11.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m.)
Tel. +668-6880-1399





Tips & Tricks

Evenings are a perfect time to enjoy views of the Bo Bit mountain range from below.



Baan Suan Plaa Carp (Koi Coffee)

is on Na Bon-Song Pueai Road in Na Chao sub-district, Chiang Khan district, Loei province. It is open daily from 7.30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Tel. +668-6942-9224



Tips & Tricks

During mango season, the restaurant offers mango bingsu, straight from its garden.



Takhon Restaurant

is in Mueang Loei Municipality near the Technic Loei Bridge. It is open daily from 10 a.m - 7 p.m. Tel.+669 1051-8338

Takhon Café: Designer Tamasorn Niyomratjaroon, once a lecturer at Loei Rajabhat University, is the creator of souvenirs

that borrow from the dramatic Loei-style Phi Ta Khon ghost festival imagery, under the brand Takhon. The shop also contains a café and restaurant. A vegetable garden lies near the home. The menu is centred around intense I-san flavours, with dishes served in mango tree wood dishware. A highlight dish is the beloved That Ruam Chai tray set, which includes grilled seafood and fish, papaya salad with chicken feet (Thai: Tam Khot Mua Don Tin), and roast pork jerky, best enjoyed with aromatic unfinished sentence !!!

Ghostly Matters

In addition to Loei's famed Phi Ta Khon Festival it has another ghostly tradition, called Phi Khon Nam. It originates from farmers in Chiang Khan district and is a ritual for ancestral ghost worship and to pay respect to Phi Chao Pu (a spirit-ghost that protects the safety and peace of locals). It's known for its Maeng Na Ngam buffalo-style masks to hark back to a time when buffaloes were used as sacred offerings. There's also the Phi Bung Tao procession, which is a ceremony where calabash gourds and traditional yarn flags are offered to a majestic Buddha statue on Phu Ruea mountain. The Hai Tak villagers, who live on Phu Ruea mountain, create masks from the gourds to signify plentifulness and march in a colourful procession - a unique sight indeed.




FESTIVALS

- The merriment and play during the Phi Ta Khon Festival is part of the Bun Luang event, held around June or July of each year. The dates are determined by a medium (Thai: Chaophor Kuan) and change each year.
- Phi Khon Nam Festival is held during the first and third days of the period of the waning moon after the sixth full moon of the year (which is Visakha Puja day), at Wat Pho Si in Ban Na Sao, Na Sao sub-district, Chiang Khan district, Loei province.
- The Phi Bung Tao procession is held on 15 April every year at Phu Ruea National Park in Loei province.
- During each year's Songkran (Thai New Year) celebrations, there are Ton Dokmai, literally, flowering tree parades in nearly all provinces. For the largest parade, head to Wat Si Pho Chai in Ban Saeng Pha village, Saeng Pha sub-district, Loei province, which is held on 14 April.



Shop Till You Drop... Then Enjoy the View

 Phu Pa Po : Sunrise views from mountains are a Loei specialty, and one can't-miss location is at Phu Pa Po. At 900 metres above sea level, it is covered with Phai Po bamboo forest and is a great sunrise and sunset viewpoint. Visitors can take a tractor-pulled trolley (Thai : I-taek) trip upwards to fully immerse themselves in the ambience, then head up a few flights of stairs, working up a gentle sweat. From there, a variety of viewpoints are available, showcasing the mountain, which has earned Phu Ho a comparison to Mt. Fuji. For early risers, head to Suan Hin Pha Ngam, a collection of limestone outcrops that earned it the nickname, "Kunming of Thailand". A hip, container-style hotel called Smile Box is a convenient place to stay.

Tips & Tricks

- Once you've made your way down the mountain, be sure to try the Khao Lam Phai Po, which is a lightly sweet snack of sticky rice and other fillings stuffed inside a bamboo stem and grilled to golden-brown perfection. It's on offer at the visitor's centre at the base of Phu Pa Po at the car park.
- Private vehicles are not allowed up Phu Pa Po so it is recommended to hire a tractor-style (Thai: I-taek) tour trip at the visitor centre.



Tips & Tricks

Mueang Loei OTOP Shopping Centre : This collection of shops offers souvenirs, household items and collectibles from Thailand's "One Tambon, One Product" (tambon means sub-district) project. There are great local coffee beans (from Na Duang district), macadamias (from Na Haeo district), as well as other colourful products to be found here.



Phu Pa Po

is located at Ban Pha Wai Puan Phu sub-district, Nong Hin district, Loei province. Kindly contact Mr. Boonleu Phromhala (the village headman at Ban Pha Wai) at +668-9764-6829.

Mueang Loei OTOP Shop

is located on Nok Kaeo Road, Kut Pong sub-district, Mueang Loei district, Loei province. It is open daily from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. Tel.+669-8172-1113

Additional Information

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Loei Office, is located at Mueang Loei district office (original building) at Charoenrat Road, Kut Pong sub-district, Mueang Loei district, Loei province.

Tel. +66-4281-2812, +66-4281-1405 Fax. +66-4281-1480

E-mail : tatloei@tat.or.th Facebook: TAT Loei Office

Loei: The Peak of Flavour (3 Days, 2 Nights)

DAY 1

Dan Sai district and Café De Mena

10.30 A.M.

Depart from Bangkok's Don Mueang International Airport and head towards Loei province.

12 P.M.

Land and head to Dan Sai district.

1.30 P.M.

Enjoy lunch at Khrua Mae Khamphan Restaurant. Try leaf-wrapped snacks called Miang Khon and Kang Sua Kai chicken curry.

3 P.M.

Head to Phu Ruea district.

3.45 P.M.

Sip a refreshing drink and enjoy the views of organic paddy fields at Café De Mena. Enjoy dinner made with chemical-free vegetables and five-colour rice, presented in a Thai-style pinto box.

6 P.M.

Head back to the accommodation in Loei. Rest and relax.



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DAY 2

Ban Tai Dam Village and Loei Tam Loei Restaurant

8 A.M.

Breakfast at the hotel.

9 A.M.

Head towards Chiang Khan district.

12 P.M.

Enjoy a Tai Dam lunch at the Tai Dam Village Museum. Join a lesson on how to make Tum Nok Tum Nu hanging charms. Shop for souvenirs.

3 P.M.

Head to Ban Suan Pla Carp (Koi Coffee) Restaurant. Sip rose-lemon tea and sample Khanom Pia Sai Foi Thong Khai Khem (salty-egg floss-stuffed cake confections).

4.30 P.M.

Head to Loei Tam Loei Restaurant for a healthy dinner with edible flowers. Watch as your butterfly pea flower drink changes colour.

7 P.M.

Head back to the accommodation at Nong Hin district. Rest and relax.



DAY 3

Phu Pa Po Na Rao Kwang Restaurant and Takhon Café

4.30 A.M.

Head towards Phu Pa Po and join an I-taek tractor-style tour up the mountain to enjoy sunrise views of the surrounding peaks.

8 A.M.

Head back to the hotel, have breakfast and rest.

11 A.M.

Head to Mueang Loei district to have lunch at Takhon Café. Be sure to order its must-try dish, That Ruam Chai set tray, and shop for souvenirs.

2 P.M.

Head to Na Rau Kwang Restaurant for an afternoon tea amongst expansive rice fields.

3.30 P.M.

Shop till you drop at the Mueang Loei OTOP Shopping Centre.

4.40 P.M.

Head towards Loei Airport

6 P.M.

Depart on a flight from Loei back to Bangkok. Bon voyage!



ROUTE MAP Loei



Sakon Nakhon-Nakhon Phanom: Authenticity by the Bank of the Mekong

Sakon Nakhon has yielded a bounty of products that are authentic to their core, and protected by the GI (Geographical Indication) mark. The province's traditions have been faithfully passed down and have become iconic and unique. Altogether, they make up a uniquely exciting and fascinating journey that takes you from Sakon Nakhon to Nakhon Phanom, which lies on the bank of the great Mekong River.





In Search of Thailand's GI-worthy Sights

Amongst the 77 provinces belonging to Thailand, Sakon Nakhon stands out because it has been awarded five products marked with GI, showing they cannot be made or grown elsewhere: Phon Yang Kham beef, Sakon Thawapi Hang Golden Aromatic Rice, traditional indigo Mak Mao bery and Mak Mao juice. The local specialties are branded with "GI" from the Department of Intellectual Property, joining a list of over 100 other products throughout the Kingdom.

Once known as Sakon Thawapi, modern-day Sakon Nakhon is the birthplace of famed Sakon Thawapi Hang Golden Aromatic Rice. This special variety's very existence depended on the careful preservation of the Phu Thai Migrant's oldest traditions and way of life, as they relocated to Waritchaphum district. During times when rice was scarce, children began to go hungry and it was not yet time to harvest the current season's crop, locals harvested rice before they were mature. Using local methods, the locals forced the paddies to mature by storing them in sacks and steaming them in pit ovens dug into the ground, with troughs for charcoal. In the local Isan dialect, these ovens are called Tao Hang. The paddies are then taken to be milled. This allows much of the nutrition to be preserved as well. To earn a GI mark, the hang rice must be created from either a specific strain of unhulled sticky rice (Type: Ko Kho 6) or unhulled Mali rice (Type 105) that was grown in either Waritchaphum, Phang Khon, or Akat Amnuai district. They are golden yellow, soft and aromatic. Moreover, they are full of protein and vitamins that are shown to reduce stress, improve sleep, reduce pins and needles, protect against memory issues, reduce blood pressure and promote satiety, due to containing between 15-20 times more fibre than regular white rice.





Thailand's Storied Phon Yang Kham Beef


Steak aficionados agree: beef from Phon Yang Kham village is simply Thailand's best. The cows are a mix of a European breed and a local breed with good fat striation, resulting in a tender and aromatic meat. The cows are carefully raised to strict standards and are even treated to relaxing music.



**Phon Yang Kham
Cooperative Steak Shop**

is located at Non Hom sub-district Mueang Sakon Nakhon district, in Sakon Nakhon. It is open daily from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. (with extended hours, closing at 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays)
Tel. +66-4270-4679

Fountain of Youth: Mak Mao

 The hills of Phu Phan in the Northeast teem with *Antidesma thwaitesianum* Muell. Arg. (Thai: Mak mao). Traditionally, locals forage for the berries and use them in their pounded papaya salads. The observant Mr. Khanop Wannawong saw promise in the Mak Mao and spent over 30 years collecting this “fountain of youth” fruit and planting them in Wannawong Garden. The Garden contains the most diverse range of Mak Mao in the world, approximately 31 species, including Sakon Nakhon’s own variant of Mak Mao, which has earned a GI mark. The wine made from this has also earned a GI mark, and has a sweet and sour taste, complemented by a distinctive smell. The fruit is full of anthocyanins, which guard against free radicals, cancer and slows aging.



Wannawong Garden

is located in Sang Kho sub-district, Phu Phan district, Sakon Nakhon. It is open daily from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Tel. +668-9575-7214.




Tips & Tricks

Each year, from July-August, Mak Mao will fully ripen, turning a bright red, signalling that it is ready to be harvested. However, visitors can taste, shop and look at Mak Mao products throughout the year.



Khram: Queen of Cold Dyes

 Indigo colour dye (Thai: khram) is a Sakon Nakhon local specialty, thanks to unique geographical features that help the Khram plant grow. During ancient times, locals used Khram to dye their clothes, utilising heat to turn the yellowish-green substance into a beautiful, high quality, dark blue. Since then, the practice has spread throughout the Northeast.

The natural dye has earned a GI mark, thanks to techniques that reflect the very soul of the locality, earning it the nickname, “Queen of Cold Dyes”. The cotton that has been dyed through this process is believed to nourish the skin - in Thai, it’s called “fabric of beautiful skin.” Colours range from light blue to a dark navy, and the fabrics give off a gorgeous, glowing sheen. The dyes are hardy and never fade. Moreover, they have a specific aroma that encourages relaxation. The textiles are protective against damaging UV rays and are therefore also cooling, perfect for the Thai climate. Production of this textile is designated only to 18 districts within Sakon Nakhon.




In fact, the tradition is so revered that it is believed that the large cauldron in which the Khram dye is kept is alive, due to having living bacteria inside it. The Khram is “fed” (much like yeast starter is “fed” in the West) red lime, tamarind paste and granulated sugar. According to belief, pregnant women or menstruating women are not allowed to come near the Khram cauldron, because the Khram could die as a result. Nowadays, there are many techniques in Khram dyeing as well as many patterns, including Shibori-style tie-dyeing, which originates from Japan. Visitors can learn this technique and experiment with dyeing as well. They can peruse Khram textiles at Kram Sakon shop.



Khram Sakon Shop

is located at Huai Yang sub-district, Mueang Sakon Nakhon district, Sakon Nakhon. It is open daily from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tel. +668-0582-6655 (To take classes and try out natural Khram dyeing techniques, please reserve in advance.)

Hidden Treasure: Khon Khaen

 Ban Nong San is a handicraft village where nearly all homes specialise in Khram dyeing. The quiet collection of homes is also where Sommanas Farm, an agricultural education centre, is located. The Farm is aimed at teaching chemical-free agriculture in line with the principle of sustainable living.

Within it lies a hidden treasure: Khon Khaen (scientific name : *Dracaena angustifolia*), an edible plant that at first sight seems like a decorative vase plant at home. The plant is in the asparagus family, and it is a rare vegetable with a rather complex preparation process.

After picking each stalk individually, they must be carefully peeled to reveal a tender, edible flesh.

The vegetable is then boiled, steamed, fried or cooked in a curry. The delicate crunch, slight sweet taste and nutty flavour are a delight. Local herbal medicine says Khon Khaen can even help with diabetes.

Tips & Tricks

Visitors in June (during the rainy season) can join in the paddy-tending process.



Ban Nong San Tourist Village

is located at Khok Phu sub-district, Phu Phan district, Sakon Nakhon. Tel. +669-8476-3184




Another must-try dish is Chaeo Khiao, which is a flavourful paste that blends garlic, fresh chilies and dill together. It is then seasoned with salt and hog plums for a lip-smackingly intense and delicious dip, eaten with a local chicken soup (Thai: Tom Kai Dam Phu Phan) that features a crossbreed of local and Chinese black chickens.



Merit-making Jewellery : Tumhu Thung

Pieces of Khram fabric and textiles with natural dyes are pieced together to create “plume” earrings (Thai: Tumhu Thung) and Thung earrings (Thai: Tumhu Thun). They were once used as decoration for Bun Phra Wet-merit-making ceremony. Nowadays, they are made by locals at Ban Nong San and sold as souvenirs as a way to increase the value and appeal of their embroidery and crochet work. All are welcome (including visitors) to take part in learning and purchasing these adorable handmade gifts.

Food from the Heart

 Sakon Nakhon is home to many eateries that have earned a reputation for using the best local ingredients to make heart-warming dishes, delighting foodie visitors.

Ban Faprong Restaurant : Ms. Sunantha Julaphong (given the respectful name of “Khun Mae Sunantha”), the owner of Ban Faprong Restaurant, has years of experience in both travel and food. She blended the two to create a stylish selection of high quality dishes with her daughter and son-in-law, who are both doctors. As a result, the dishes are also healthy. The restaurant uses local, in-season vegetables from farmers nearby as well as chemical-free produce as their main ingredients. Each dish is free of MSG and is served alongside two layers of rice: rice berry and butterfly pea flower-infused rice.

The most recommended dish is neem shoots and flowers salad with salty-and-sweet fish sauce (Thai: Yam Sadao Nampla Wan) and Wai curry (Thai: Kaeng Wai). The latter is a soup made of rattan shoots collected from the hilltops, which is boiled with Bai Ya Nang vine juice (scientific name: *Tiliacora triandra*) and blended to create a curry with intense colours and soothing flavours.



Ban Faprong Restaurant

is located on Rop Mueang Road in Mueang Sakon Nakhon district in Sakon Nakhon. It is open daily (except Sundays) from 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. Tel. +66-4271-5729



Saban Nga Restaurant: This authentic, historic restaurant has kept its doors open to visitors for ages. It is known for both its original recipes and its more innovative options, like the Chaeo sauce fish, which uses fish marinated in a paste of cooked sticky rice. The result is a firm almost bouncy-flesh fish. They're also known for their bamboo shoot and toasted sesame spiey salad

(Thai: Sup Nomai Nga Khua), which combines fresh, tender bamboo shoots with coconut milk and roasted white sesame seeds, the latter replacing the more typical fermented fish paste (Thai: Pla Ra).



Saban Nga Restaurant

is on Rat Phatthana Road, Mueang Sakon Nakhon district, Sakon Nakhon province. It is open every day from 10.30 a.m. - 10 p.m. Tel. +66-4273-3428.



Gypsy Coffee Drip Café: The great-granddaughter of “Grandma Teeta”, who was renowned for producing the most beautiful Khram textiles in the province, has fallen in love with coffee aromas and many varieties. Now, the coffee shop offers her own selection of local coffee and other coffee beans, served in line with an innovative, quirky concept, each with names like “Get Wise”, “Primitive Coffee” and so on.



Gypsy Coffee Drip Café

is located in Ban village in Khamin sub-district, Mueang Sakon Nakhon district, Sakon Nakhon. It is open daily from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Tel. +669-5145-6496



Nakhon Phanom: On the Bank of the Mekong River

Thanks to the serenity of the riverside province, it is sometimes easy to forget that this is where the Tai Saek people, who endured invasions by Vietnamese forces, had fled to seek safety. They settled down here, in At Samat sub-district, Mueang Nakhon Phanom district in Nakhon Phanom.

At the time, the governor viewed the Tai Saek people who were of the Mon origin, and felt they were potential fighters, trained them and employed them in the ancient Atthamat army to protect the country... as well as work as spies.

The Tai Saek cuisine (Saek means “clarity” or “brightness”) is known for using local vegetables and herbs, dipped in a sweet and salty fish sauce seasoned with fermented fish paste (Thai: Mang Ta Suat Ta Suat is a dialect meaning) “to roll back the eyes” - because taking a bite of this dish means opening your mouth so wide that your eyes roll back. During the 3rd lunar month of each year (the dates change due to the moon phases), the Tai Saek people hold a ceremony to worship their ancestors, called Ong Mu. One of the rituals during this ceremony is called Phithi Kin Tedden, during which dancers perform to music played with wooden pestles as percussion instruments, called “Saek Ten Sak”. Nowadays, pestles are no longer used during this ritual, as they have been replaced by other wooden instruments. It is a particularly rare sight because it is the only performed during Ong Mu. ceremony



Tai Saek Tribe Tour
is located in At Samat sub-district,
Mueang Nakhon Phanom district,
Nakhon Phanom.
Tel. +668-7953-1319,
+666-1437-4637

Present-day Tai Saek locals continue with their distinctive lifestyles and have become a major tourist sight at the Tai Saek Cultural Centre and the Ong Mu Shrine.

In addition, they are known for making handicraft dolls and textile and silver souvenirs, which visitors are welcome to observe daily.



Nakhon Phanom: Delicious and a Delight

The Mekong riverside vistas change as the seasons evolve, and so do its variety of sightseeing spots. They include Phrathat Nakhon relic stupas, where worship festivals are held (and is the stupa for those born on Saturdays) at Wat Mahathat Nakhon Phanom Fomer Governor's Residence Museum (Thai: Chuan Phuwa Lang Kao), a historic home built in the colonial style on the bank whose owner of the river, with a charming souvenir shop in the back; and Gooba House, an over-100-year-old house of the Vietnamese chief engineer in the Colonial style with no foundation piles that is open for visitors with no admission and also serves as a Ho Chi Minh's Memorial, a house in honour of "Uncle Ho", where he once stayed in Thailand before returning to reclaim independence for Vietnam, and Phaya Si Satta Nakkharat, the seven-headed Naga and sacred icon on the Mekong bank of Lao PDR and Thailand, and an important landmark of Nakhon Phanom and a tourism centre of the Mekong Sub-region.



Nakhon Phanom Former Governor's Residence Museum

is located on Sunthon Wichit Road (along the Mekong River), in Nai mueng sub-district, Mueng Nakhon Phanom district, Nakhon Phanom. It is open on Wednesday - Sunday from 9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Tel. +66-4251-3490-1

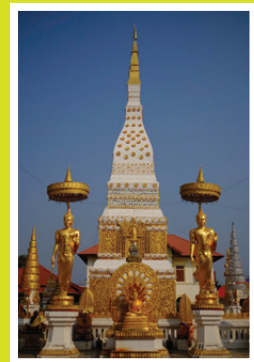
FESTIVALS

Sakon Nakhon

- **The Prasat Phueng Procession** is held on the last day of the Thai-Lao observance of Buddhist Lent (Thai: Wan Ok Phansa) in the 11th lunar month, generally October. The festivities are held on Suk Kasem Road and continue towards Wat Phrathat Choengchum Worawihan
- **Sakon Nakhon Christmas Star Parade** is held during Christmas of each year, between 23-25 December at Saint Michael's Cathedral in Ban Tha Rae and the Tha Rae-Nong Saeng Mission in Sakon Nakhon district in Sakon Nakhon.

Nakhon Phanom

- **Worship Ceremony for Phrathat Phanom** is held in the 3rd lunar month of the year according to moon phases, generally in February. Please check the dates before making plans.
- **The Illuminated Boat Procession ceremony (Thai: Huea Fai)** is held in the 11th lunar month of the year according to moon phases, generally in October. Please check the dates before making plans.



Chelsea Riverside is a restaurant with a stunning view of The Mekong River. The owner, who lived in Chelsea, United Kingdom for more than 30 years, is an experienced chef, especially in Thai-European cuisine. Here uses locally available ingredients for the freshest experience; e.g., chemical-free vegetables grown aside from The Mekong River Freshly caught fish from The Mekong River and Nakhorn Phanom's homegrown pork, which is one of the major ingredients for the recommended menu "Pork knuckle".



Chelsea Riverside

is on Chayangkun Road in Nong Saeng sub-district, Mueang Nakhon Phanom district, Nakhon Phanom. It is open daily from 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Tel. +66-4252-1100



Lan Phaya Si Satta Nakkharat

is located in front of The Forest Office on Santhon Wichit Road. in Nai Mueang sub-district, Mueang Nakhon Phanom district, Nakhon Phanom.



President Ho Chi Minh's Memorial

Is located in Ban Na Chok, Nong Yat sub-district, Mueang Nakhon Phanom district, Nakhon Phanom. Open daily 8.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.
Tel. +668-1768-6135 and +668-8036-6218





R Restaurant : Photographers and fans of photography will do well to stay at R Photo Hotel, which is full of a selection of photographs from modern-day Thailand as well as yesteryear. Its restaurant, R Restaurant, is known for its ambiance and menu, which features Phon Yang Kham beef steaks on its grill. It also offers authentic Vietnamese food; such as, Naem Nueang (Vietnamese sausage wrap), which is eaten with hydroponic vegetables. Its dips are made using sticky rice flour instead of wheat flour, and its low-fat sausage is free of flour as well.



76a the Space: This classic coffee shop has been brought back to life and is now a lively stop for many visitors looking to sip coffee as they enjoy a relaxing view.



Additional Information

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Nakhon Phanom Office (covering Sakon Nakhon, Nakhon Phanom and Mukdahan) is located at Sunthon Wichit Road, Nai Mueang sub-district, Mueang Nakhon Phanom district, Nakhon Phanom. Tel. +66-4251-3490-1 Fax. +66-4251-3492 E-mail : tatphnom@tat.or.th



Gooba House

Is located on Sunthon Wichit Road, in Nong Saeng sub-district, Mueang Nakhon Phanom district, Nakhon Phanom. Open daily from 9.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.
Tel. +669-8591-6551



R Restaurant

is located on the grounds of R Photo Hotel on Nakhon Phanom-That Phanom Road in Tha Kho sub-district, Mueang Nakhon Phanom district, Nakhon Phanom. It is open daily from 7 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Tel. +66-4219-9999, +666-2432-4444



76a the Space

is on Dit Wong Withi Road, Nongsang sub-district, Mueang Nakhon Phanom district, Nakhon Phanom. It is open daily from 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Tel. +669-4616-1965

Sakon Nakhon - Nakhon Phanom:

Authenticity by the Mekong River (3 days, 2 nights)

DAY 1

Sommanas Farm, Wannawong Garden and Saban Nga Restaurant

7.05 A.M.

Flight departs from Don Mueang International Airport in Bangkok towards Sakon Nakhon province.

9 A.M.

Enjoy breakfast at the Green Corner Restaurant.

9.40 A.M.

Head towards Ban Nong San at Khok Phu sub-district, Phu Phan district.

10.40 A.M.

Get your hands dirty picking vegetables and cooking them during class at the Sommanas Farm's kitchen. Enjoy lunch.

1.30 P.M.

Learn embroidery and how to make Thung-style earrings.

2.30 P.M.

Depart for Wannawong Garden in Sang Kho sub-district, Phu Phan district.

3.30 P.M.

Enjoy the largest variety of Mak Mao plants in the world. Learn how to make the GI-protected Mak Mao Juice and Mak Mao wine out of the area's main species (Thai: Mak Mao Luang) in the Sakon Nakhon style.

4.30 P.M.

Head back to Mueang Sakon Nakhon district.

5.30 P.M.

Enjoy a delicious dinner, including steamed, flavourful fish with Chaeo sauce (Thai: Pla Nueng Chaeo), bamboo shoot and roasted sesame spicy salad (Thai: Sup Nomai Nga Khua) at the Saban Nga Restaurant

7 P.M.

Head back for an overnight stay at a hotel in Mueang Sakon Nakhon district. Rest and relax.

40 I-San Coolinary

DAY 2

Khram Sakon Fabric Dyeing, Ban Faprong Restaurant, Gypsy Coffee Drip Café, and R Restaurant

8 A.M.

Enjoy breakfast.

9 A.M.

Head towards Khram Sakon in Huaiy Yang sub-district, Mueang Sakon Nakhon district, Sakon Nakhon.

9.30 A.M.

Join a DIY dyeing session using Shibori-style tie-dyeing and Khram dye. Shop for Khram textiles.

12 P.M.

Head to Ban Faprong Restaurant for a healthy local lunch.

2 P.M.

Head out to sample wacky concept coffee at the Gypsy Coffee Drip Café.

3.30 P.M.

Head to Nakhon Phanom province and stay at the R Photo Hotel.

6 P.M.

Enjoy dinner at the R Restaurant (on the grounds of the R Photo Hotel). Order the specialty grilled steak, made from Phon Yang Kham beef and Vietnamese food.

7 P.M.

Head back to your room to rest and relax.

DAY 3

Phrathat Nakhon Tai Saek, 76a the Space, and Ban Lung Ho

7 A.M.

Enjoy breakfast.

8 A.M.

Head to Wat Mahathat, where Phrathat Nakhon relics (or Nakhon Stupa, designated for those born on Saturdays), is located.

9 A.M.

Visit the Nakhon Phanom Former Governor's Residence Museum (Thai: Chuan Phuwa Lang Kao)

10 A.M.

Head towards Ajsamart Ban At Samat in At Samat sub-district, Mueang Nakhon Phanom district, to learn about the Tai Sak way of life on the bank of the Mekong River. Sample Miang Ta Suat, a special cuisine from the area and try the local dipping sauce with fish (Thai: Pla Chum). Shop for souvenirs.

12 P.M.

Stop at the Chelsea Riverside Restaurant to try their famed deep-fried pork leg dish.

1 P.M.

Shop for souvenirs at Boeng Nakhon Shop.

1.30 P.M.

Relax with a cup of coffee and beautiful views of the Mekong River at 76a the Space.

2.20 P.M.

Visit the Ho Chi Minh Memorial Museum (also called "Khu Tuong Niem Chu Tich Ho Chi Minh").

3.30 P.M.

Head to Nakhon Phanom Airport.

4.50 P.M.

Depart from Nakhon Phanom Airport towards Bangkok. Bon voyage!

ROUTE MAP

Sakon Nakhon - Nakhon Phanom



Khon Kaen-Kalasin-Maha Sarakham: The New Wave Northeast

Though Thailand's authentic I-san (Northeastern) charm has drawn countless visitors for decades, the Northeast isn't only about the traditional I-san way of life. It's also the centre of a new wave of ideas and flavours that has breathed a new life into the region, creating novel culinary and sightseeing experiences.

A journey through Khon Kaen, Kalasin and Maha Sarakham is also a trip through the eyes of a younger generation of Northeasterners who have infused traditional food and living with modern styles and trendy tastes.







A Long Way Home



A happy life in The United Kingdom took an unexpected turn (or, rather, return) for Khwanchai Preedee when he began attending a Thai temple in London. As he practiced and learned more about dharma, his perspective shifted and he felt touched by what he discovered. He began volunteering, and soon this sparked a shift in focus back to his country of birth. The maxim, “Don’t wait for someone to ask, just help” soon came to mind, and his life turned to the Buddhist teachings on dharma and the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s thoughts on sustainability.

Thus, the Prampree International Eco Village was born. The centre draws international volunteers drawn from Ecotourists as well as Buddhist practitioners from around the world. Together, they have found a creative and constructive way to give back: youth English language camps. The volunteers boost youths’ confidence in speaking English by making English fun and having them interact with native speakers. They also learn about community service, sustainable living, nature and sharing with the idea that nature and experience are the best teachers. Their aim? To break kids out of the habit of living their lives through computer and mobile phone screens.

The centre believes that dharma is synonymous with taking care of nature and the environment. Participants discover the joys and delights all around them - in the vegetable gardens, the lake of lotuses, and even the kitchen - making a mark on all visitors. The produce is grown organically and is chemical-free, either locally or within the organic agricultural network nearby. A simple menu utilises available ingredients. For instance, even just the various parts of a lotus can be used in a diverse range of dishes - all free of toxic chemicals and MSG, in a natural, sustainable living ambiance.



Prampree International Eco Village

is located in Ban Thung Sawang Village in Lam Phan sub-district, Mueang Kalasin district, Kalasin province. Please contact the centre in advance. Tel. +669-9446-2654

Another re-pat (an expat who has returned home) is Ms. Jongrak “Poo” Jaruphannangarm. She worked in the restaurant industry in The United Kingdom for six years before returning to her hometown and founding Mekin Farm. The Farm is also a tourist destination, created to showcase the I-san way of life with special attention on the food. Jaruphannangarm specialises in I-san home cooking, serving dishes created right from the Farm with recipes passed down from her mother. The grounds yield plenty of ingredients for her to choose from thanks to the many plots and facilities. Rice paddies, forests, vegetable plots, vine gardens and a traditional thatched-roof milling structure are scattered around the peaceful, private space. It’s perfect for a relaxing weekend amongst family and friends, who can come together to enjoy meals I-san-style: sharing sticky rice and flavourful traditional food in a circle.




Mekin Farm

is located in Chorakhe sub-district,
Nong Ruea district in Khon Kaen province.
It is open 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
(except Wednesdays).
Tel. +666-1695-9926





The Retro-tastic Charm of the Northeast

 Young millionaire Thanabordee Phromsukh turned his dream into a 100-million-Baht business with his creation of elephant dung coffee, which he branded Chang Thongkhum Coffee. Currently, Thailand has only three elephant dung coffee producers and Chang Thongkhum Coffee is the only producer in I-san. For his product, elephants (voluntarily) eat organic Arabica coffee beans harvested from Doi Suan Ya Luang in Nan province. Then, the beans are harvested from their dung. Only 1 kg of coffee beans are made for each 33 kilograms of beans fed to the elephants. The result? A smooth, fragrant bean with the perfect level of bitterness, making the elephant dung coffee a standout from all other regular varieties. It also marks it as the most expensive high-end coffee in the world. It is exported to China, Taiwan and Singapore. Visitors to the Chang Thongkhum Café will be able to have a cup of this special coffee. The Café is located inside the Changthongkhum Elephant Conservation Centre in Wapi Pathum district. All profits from the food and beverages sold at the Café are used for the care and preservation of the elephants.



**Changthongkhum
Elephant Conservation
Centre**

is located in Na Kha sub-district, Wapee Pathum district, Maha Sarakham province. It is open daily from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Tel. +669-3686-9016

Heading away from Wapi Pathum district, we go to Ban Dong Noi in Na Dun district, which is a model sustainable living village. A local legend about “Don Pu Ta” highlights how the people here are closely connected to nature. It is believed that the area is under the protection of an ancestral spirit called Phi Pu Ta, who guards against logging and those who would behave with disrespect. At the annual Buddhist Makha Puja festivals, it is customary here for the village elders to offer boiled chicken and herbs, a soup named after the ancestral spirit called Tom Kai Ta Pu. The dish and its authentic taste have been handed down through the generations, and offers visitors a glimpse of local belief and culture, alongside of the silk and textiles also made here.

Another retro-style sight is the country home of Khru Rungroj and Khru Phensri, called Field Shine Café. The eatery was created to cater to nature lovers and foodies alike to enjoy the best I-san dishes amongst the rice fields; such as Chaeo Pu Na (spicy rice paddy crabs), laarb poo na (spicy rice paddy crab salad), Gm Pu Na (rice paddy crab curry) and even more during the rainy season.



Ban Dong Noi

is located in Na Dun district, Maha Sarakham province. Please contact in advance. Tel. +668-9926-4859




Field Shine Café

is located in Ban Nang Yai (near Wat Uthai Thit 2), at Talat sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham district, Maha Sarakham province. It is open daily from 5 p.m. - midnight. Tel. +669-4535-2656



Heart & Soul Food

 A blend of knowledge, experience and a fondness for their hometown has led to the new generation creating a creative collection of eateries.

Eights A Day: As part of the Khon Kaen Love Local project, an entrepreneurial trailblazer called Khun Fah (who actually studied architecture) created Eights A Day as a café and restaurant made for relaxing. The industrial loft-style space is sleek and tranquil. Khun Fah used her experience in the restaurant industry during her studies in The United Kingdom for the eatery, and created a simple menu with healthy dishes. The focus? Quality and value - the dishes are at a price that everyone can afford. It's a great place to fill your belly before a trip. She takes particular care in selecting produce and meats from organic farms and coffee beans from her travels. She also uses eco-friendly products.



Eights A Day

is located on Adul Yaram Road, Nai Mueang sub-district, Mueang Khon Kaen district in Khon Kaen. It is open daily from 6.30 a.m. - 5 p.m. The kitchen closes at 4 p.m. Tel. +668-5521-8801



Sunset Gelato: This low-fat gelato shop is the creation of Khun Niew, whose homemade frosty treats are sold at Sunset Gelato. He brings vibrant, creative energy to the area with a wide variety of fruit flavours of local craft gelato. The flavours are seasonal and always in line with what is on offer at organic farms in Sam Sung district. The low-fat dessert is made without any powdered milk or artificial flavors. Be sure to try the shop's signature item, Khanom Pia Thai sweet Pastry flavour ice cream, which is astonishingly faithful to the real Thai dessert. He adds a crunch to each mouthful by serving the dish with healthy cereals and grains on top.



Sunset Gelato
(Krachom Kangsadan
branch)

is located in Nai Mueang sub-district,
Mueang Khon Kaen district in Khon
Kaen. It is open daily from noon -
9 p.m.
Tel. +668-8572-4740



The Concept Aromatic Thai Cuisine

is located on Maliwan Road, Nai Mueang sub-district, Mueang Khon Kaen district in Khon Kaen (right before reaching Khon Kaen Airport). It is open daily from 11.30 a.m. - 10 p.m. Tel. +669-4512-8685



The Concept Aromatic Thai Cuisine: When Chef Boon returned to his hometown, he brought with him years of culinary experience in big-name hotels. He then founded The Concept: a coffee and tea place great for some food and rest. The relaxing, loft-style café is also easy to get to for travellers because it is so close to the airport. It serves Thai and European food as well as snacks from yesteryear, like Khao Tang Na Tang (rice crackers with dip), Khanom Bueang Yuan Sawoei (savoury egg crêpe), as well as its signature dish: pork leg fried in fish sauce, which is served alongside three flavourful sauces. Its piping hot lattes are served up with dinosaurs drawn in the foam (the symbol of Khon Kaen town).

Thai E-san Food Fusion (Thai: Raan Tawan Ok Chiang Nuea):

When the lead singer of an indie rock band called “Beer MahaFather” grew tired of the city life, he returned to Maha Sarakham province to create this I-san-style restaurant. Created to appeal and be accessible to all, the eatery offers food cooked just like his mother did, making it an authentic I-san spot. It presents fusion food, blending Central Thai dishes with northeastern favourites. Diners can relax in a homey, garden-style setting - complemented by casual bamboo platforms. Each ingredient is carefully selected and all produce rinsed with a bio-fermented solution. Their homemade fermented fish paste with mulberry leaves and pickled bamboo shoots is testament to the high standard of cleanliness and care. Highlight dishes include Khao Chi (grilled sticky rice) fried with herbs, chicken curry with glass noodles, raw mushroom dumplings (Thai: Mok Het), seafood and spicy and pungent seafood ‘salad’ (Thai: Tam Kaolao Thaley Ruam). Intense tastes are guaranteed since the chef is generous with seasonings giving you a true I-san experience.



**Thai E-san
Food Fusion**
(Thai : Raan Tawan
Ok Chiang Nua)

is located on Rim Khlong Road,
Talat sub-district, Mueang
Maha Sarakham district in
Maha Sarakham. It is open
daily from 4 p.m. - midnight.
Tel. +666-1423-2546



Ar Ra Ya Farm: This modern organic farm is the creation of engineer buddies Khun Oh and Khun Top. The duo dreamt of a sustainable agricultural life, and rehabilitated a barren plot of land into today's Ar Ra Ya Farm. The Farm is also a centre for education, and it teaches new agricultural theories, sustainable Sufficiency Economy principles, mixed cultivation for fruit, as well as how to farm without chemicals. Its field of flowers change each season and adds vibrant colours to the Farm year-round. The retro-style café has indoor as well as al fresco dining, including a spot under an enormous rain tree. The Farm also sells its organic produce.



 **Ar Ra Ya Farm**
is located in Ban Non Hua Fai within Kaeng Loeng sub-district, Mueang Maha Sarakham district in Maha Sarakham. It is open daily from 8.30 a.m. - 7 p.m. Tel. +669-1961-9515

A Sea of Fluttering Thread

 An endless parade of colourful “Thung” (decorative thread craft) is in store during the annual Makha Puja and Visakha Puja celebrations. The sacred offerings are brought in by locals from all around the province to the Phrathat Yakhu relic site at the ancient city, Mueang Fa Daet Song Yang (founded nearly 600 years ago). It is believed to enshrine the remains of one of the most highly-regarded monks in the area, who was referred to as “Phra Thera Phuyai”, or Yakhu in the local dialect, the namesake of the relic site. The carefully woven spider-web Thungs symbolise beauty and fortune. Ancient I-san belief says these particular offerings will help rid everyone of karmic suffering and allow them to go to heaven, making the Thung a particularly favoured tribute during Buddhist ceremonies.

Tips & Tricks

The Ban Kok community of textile makers use natural dyes to create Maha Sarakham’s famed woven Ban Kok textiles (Thai: Pha Tho Ban Kok). It provides comprehensive training from spinning thread to creating a finished piece. Visitors can watch, as they make the textiles as well as peruse pieces that are on sale at the Ban Kok Textile Centre.



FESTIVALS

Khon Kaen

- Celebrate Songkran (Thai New Year) in two different ways: the original, traditional way at Wat Chai Si, Ban Sawathi, Mueang Khon Kaen district, or the street party at Khao Niao Road (Thai: Ngan Sut Yot Songkran I-san).
- International Silk Festival, (Pook Xiao) Tradition, and Red Cross Fair are held from 29 November to 10 December annually. They include exhibitions from silk sellers in the Greater Mekong Subregion as well as other local cultural performances.



Phrathat Yakhu

is located in Ban Sema in Nong Paen sub-district, within Kamalasai district, Kalasin.



Pha Tho Ban Kok Group

is located in Hua Rua sub-district, Wapi Pathum district, Maha Sarakham. Please contact the group in advance.
Tel. +668-5047-5559

Kalasin

- Celebrations for the Buddhist festivities Makha Purami, Thawarawadi Ming La at the ancient Fa Daet Song Yang city in Kamalasai district are held yearly during Makha Puja Day. More specifically, it is held at the Phrathat Yakhu relic site, and includes parades of beautiful thung offerings, flower parades, traditional dances, candlelit procession and other tradition of paying respect. Visitors are treated to the sight of a sea of fluttering thung ornaments as festivities take place.
- Celebrations for Visakha Punnami and the traditional bathing rite for the Phra that Yakhu relic site in Kamalasai district are held during the Buddhist Visakha Puja rituals every year. The rites are held at the Phrathat Yakhu relic site and include the traditional bathing rituals, a Thung parade, a thung offering rite, Buang Suang prayer ceremony, traditional dance, thung-making demonstrations, cultural shows and alms-giving. It also includes a candle-lit procession around the site, which is decorated with a sea of thung.

Maha Sarakham

- Phra Borommathat Na Dun relic worshipping ceremony is held for nine days and nine nights during the annual Makha Puja festival.
- ASEAN Klong Yao Drumming Competitions are held at the end of December every year at the District office field in Wapi Pathum district, Maha Sarakham.



Additional Information

The Tourism Authority of Thailand, (Khon Kaen Office responsible for Khon Kaen, Maha Sarakham, Kalasin and Roi Et) is located on Klang Mueang Road (also known as Western Rop Bueng Kaen Nakhon Road) in Nai Mueang sub-district, Mueang Khon Kaen district, Khon Kaen. Tel. +66-4322-7714-6 Fax. +66-4322-7717 +66-4322-7719 E-mail : tatkhkn@tat.or.th

Khon Kaen-Kalasin-Maha Sarakham: I-san-Style Indie Experiences

DAY 1

Eights A Day, Prampreddee International Eco Village, Ar Ra Ya Farm, Thai E-san Food Fusion

7 A.M.

Take off from Don Mueang International Airport to Khon Kaen province.

8.30 A.M.

Enjoy breakfast at Eights A Day.

9.30 A.M.

Head to Kalasin province.

11 A.M.

Stop by Prampreddee International Eco Village for lunch and sightseeing.

1 P.M.

Depart for Phrathat Yakhu to pay your respect sacred relics and explore the ancient site.

2.15 P.M.

Head to Maha Sarakham province.

3 P.M.

Discover organic fruit and vegetables at Ar Ra Ya Farm, and relax with an afternoon cup of tea.

4 P.M.

Head back towards your accommodation in Maha Sarakham.

6 P.M.

Stop for dinner at Thai E-san Food Fusion (Thai: Tawan Ok Chiang Nuea).

7 P.M.

Return to your accommodation for relaxation and rest.

56 I-San Coolinary

DAY 2

Ban Dong Noi, Ban Kok, Chang Thongkum Café and Field Shine Café

9 A.M.

Have breakfast at A-chi meet, Eat, Drink Restaurant and Café.

10 A.M.

Head to Ban Dong Noi in Na Dun district to explore the community and have lunch.

12.30 P.M.

Depart for Ban Kok in Wapi Pathum district to observe weavers, as they create textiles out of naturally-dyed cotton.

3 P.M.

Leave for Changthongkhum Elephant Conservation Centre to taste elephant dung coffee and snacks.

4.30 P.M.

Head to Field Shine Café for dinner.

7 P.M.

Return to the accommodation in Maha Sarakham for rest and relaxation.



DAY 3

Mekin Farm, Sunset Gelato and The Concept

7.30 A.M.

Have breakfast at the Accommodation.

8.30 A.M.

Head to Khon Kaen province.

10 A.M.

Explore Mekin Farm and have lunch.

2 P.M.

Head to Mueang Khon Kaen district.

3 P.M.

Stop by Sunset Gelato ice cream shop for a treat.

3.45 P.M.

Enjoy an afternoon coffee and snacks at The Concept.

6.15 P.M.

Take off from Khon Kaen Airport to Bangkok.
Bon voyage!



ROUTE MAP

Khon Kaen - Kalasin - Maha Sarakham



(Buri Ram & Surin)

From Ancient Traditions to Modern Arena


Buri Ram (translated literally: “tranquil city”) began as a prosperous ancient Khmer kingdom and to this day remains a hub of culture and tradition typical of the region. Its peaceful ambiance has transformed perfectly into a modern city also known for sports. Now, it draws visitors from the world over throughout the year.

The area’s once-active volcanoes now lie quiet. Only a few traces of their existence remain as valuable “underground treasures”... At the same time, the area’s traditional way of life remains as alive as ever.










**Ubun Samakhi
Community Tourist Centre**

is located in Non Suwan sub-district,
Non Suwan district in Buri Ram.
Tel. +669-9986-8992
(Please contact in advance.)

Local Beliefs: The Miracle of a Forest & an Underground Spring

After the 2004 tsunami, locals digging a well in Non Suwan district discovered an underground spring. Thailand's Department of Mineral Resources tested samples taken from the spring, which revealed the water contained plentiful minerals, likely due to the ancient lava flows that once covered the area. It was as if a miracle had taken place. Thanks to the mineral-rich water, produce grown in this area was especially sweet, crunchy and tasty. In fact, the water nourished not only the plants but the local livelihood, bringing stagnant earnings back to life. For those living in Ban Ubun Samakhi, the spring was life-giving, as it created higher revenue for their farm produce. The area also embraced chemical-free agricultural practices in line with the GAP standard. Visitors to Ban Non Suwan should certainly try dishes made with the local environmentally-friendly, nutritious fruit and vegetables. For farmers here, their way of thinking is that the love they put into their crops is transmitted straight to diners - via their plates. There are over 480 hectares of forest, too, perfect for seasonal foraging. Locals hold the wild areas in high regard and believe that the forest here is sacred. Many miraculous events have been attributed to the forest.

Delicious Fungus among Us

 The well in Non Suwan district is also a boon for Ban Sap Sombun, which uses its underground water for drinking as well as agriculture. Here, Termitomyces mushroom farms are ubiquitous, fed by both surface and subterranean water sources. The underground spring also flows into a lake where fish are farmed, mixing with surface water. As a result, the fish caught here have sweet, firm and delicious flesh.

The spring water is as endlessly giving as locals' big hearts. They share this mineral-rich water amongst themselves, which provides all that they need. Visitors can take part, too, by learning about their aquaculture, mushroom farms and more.

Visitors can also experience this through a meal on a peaceful raft. Try the delicious dishes made of the fresh fish and shrimp caught in the mineral water lake. Be sure to take home some of the dried or cooked mushroom snacks as gifts for loved ones, too!

Tips & Tricks

Homestays are available.



Sap Sombun Travel Village

is located on Thung Chanhan sub-district, Non Suwan district in Buri Ram. Please call in advance.
Tel. +668-1281-3487





Power of the Pickling


 Pickled shrimp (Thai: Kung Chom) are a mainstay of the local cuisine, and can be spotted in markets and on plates everywhere. However, in Prakhon Chai district, they have a special way to make it, using a technique similar to the way the region's ubiquitous fermented fish paste (Thai: Pla Ra) is made.

Long ago, when seasonal rains brought torrents of water into every pond, stream and wetland, locals could easily catch hundreds of tiny shrimp to be used as a seasoning, or to be pickled for later. The pickling process was simple: marinate the shrimp with salt and fish sauce, leave it for 2-3 days, add roasted rice and allow it to ferment for another 2-3 days. The result? The sublime Kung Chom, which unexpectedly lacks any fishy smell. Use it as a dip or seasoning to add a delicious kick to any dish. It's no surprise that the pickled dish grew to fame, with its perfectly balanced saltiness and aroma. Visitors to Prakhon Chai are well advised to purchase some to take home. While they're touring, they can try out a variety of dishes made especially tasty by Kung Chom as well.



 **Kung Chom Krayasat
Prakhon Chai
Club Community
Enterprise**
is located on Amnuai Kit road,
Prakhon Chai sub-district,
Prakhon Chai district, Buri Ram.
Tel. +669-0374-2134

Served with Love

 The local Kung Chom flavour is one worth seeking out, and local restaurants have created menus that showcase the distinctive condiment in a variety of ways.

Baan Peet Restaurant: Set by the Nong Rasaesan Weter Park, the restaurant (run by Khun Peet and his family) offers a diverse range indeed. Be sure to try their Kung Chom dishes, which are made using authentic family recipes passed down from generation to generation. For instance, try Lon Kung Chom (pickled shrimp and mince pork dip), Phat Kung Chom (pickled shrimp stir-fry), and Yam Kung Chom (pickled shrimp spicy salad). Key to getting the taste perfect is how selective the restaurant is with their Kung Chom. They also use high quality fish sauce to create their marinade, which gives their Kung Chom a distinctive aroma.



Baan Peet Restaurant

Restaurant is located in
Prakhon Chai sub-district,
Prakhon Chai district,
Buri Ram.
Tel. +66-4467-0270





Chef Plus Café and Bistro: Founded by the heir to a Buri Ram real estate business, nicknamed Chef Plus, the restaurant is mainly known for its European dishes. However, it doesn't neglect its roots either, with Kung Chom Phat Song Khrueng (spicy pickled shrimp dip). The specialty dish is made by frying mince pork, herbs and Kung Chom until fragrant. Then, it is served alongside organic vegetables and steamed rice. Likewise, try the local pork spare rib served on a tamarind steak pallet, or pork neck with spicy lava-style dip on a piping hot lava stone.



Tips & Tricks

Be sure to stop by famed eateries Ran Luk Chin Kin Yuen, which sells meat balls, by the clock tower, as well as Ran Kai Yang Sida (which sells roast chicken) and Ran Chumphol Pathongko Buri Ram (which offers delicious deep-fried dough strips, served with sweetened condensed milk).



Chef Plus Café and Bistro

and Bistro is located in Nai Mueang sub-district, Mueang Buri Ram district, Buri Ram. It is open daily from 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Tel. +669-5604-1487

A City of Delights



As a city known for its relaxing ambiance, Buri Ram is home to plentiful scenic spots. Head to the (now extinct) ancient volcano at Khao Kradong Forest Park, a monument enshrining the Buddha's simulated footprint and Phra Suphatthara Bophit Buddha statue. Another exciting sight is the hanging bridge, which traverses an old lava field across a perfectly-preserved volcano crater, located in the middle of the city.

There's also Play La Ploen Flora Park. This is the largest temperate floral park in the region and it's open year-round. Its accommodation is inspired by a variety of flowers. Every weekend, a floating market pops up offering a bevy of local household goods and snacks, as well as fun activities for visitors and residents alike.



Play La Ploen Flora Park

is located in Khu Mueang sub-district, Khu Mueang district, Buri Ram. Tel. +66-4463-4736-8, +668-7798-1039 (Admission : 150 baht (adults); 80 Baht (children); For the special course menu, please reserve in advance.)



Play La Pirom Restaurant, situated within its grounds, uses produce grown in its gardens as well as local ingredients for its menu. Visitors can try I-san fusion food; such as, Kung Chom egg roll, Kung Chom Sawoei, U-Kai Ban chicken, and pork leg a la Play La Ploen. The latter has earned a championship title two years in a row in the local pork leg contest, and it is paired with a special sauce. Finish it all up with homemade ice cream and seasonal fruit!



Nong bua kok Folk Museum: Here lie the collected joys and memories of Professor Thamnu Vorathongchai from Buriram Rajabhat University, all for show. The Museum allows visitors to experience a bygone era through exhibits, performances and learning activities (such as, pottery-making classes). Its retro-style coffee shop, Dindib Café, is a good spot to have a cuppa.

 **Nong bua kok Folk Museum**

is located in Nong bua Kok sub-district, Lam Plai Mat district, Buri Ram. It is open daily from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Tel. +668-5774-8773


Tips & Tricks

Stop for a tea or a shopping spree at Joy Shopping Place. Be sure to pop by Talat Sro Krao to peruse the wares and sample the snacks made by the locals, open in the evenings on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.



Thunder Castle Stadium (also known as Chang Arena):

This stadium is home base for Buriram United, and is the first Thai football stadium to meet the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) standards. It is a landmark for the town, and a can't-miss destination. Be sure to check out souvenirs commemorating the famous football team and the Stadium.


 **YAMAHA**
Buriram United
Megastore
(Chang Arena branch)

is located on I-san sub-district, Mueang Buri Ram district, Buri Ram. It is open daily from 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Tel. +668-5097-0097



The Tower Cafe & Hangout:

This loft-style chic coffee spot is part of the Honda Bigwing Buriram showroom. It offers food, desserts as well as beverages, served up in an easy-going atmosphere. The views from its tower offer an extra dose of tranquility, a great place to chill out from evening through the nighttime.

 **The Tower Cafe & Hangout**
is located in Isan subdistrict, Mueang Buri Ram district, Buri Ram. It is open daily from 7 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Tel. +66-4466-6305

The Best of the Best

Surin is also home to once-active volcanoes. Now, most of them are in Phanom Sawai Forest Park, which is a beautiful, lush jungle. The land here is also perfect for agriculture, and it's the reason why Surin is one of the best places to grow fragrant, tender, long-grain jasmine rice in the country. The province is also the pilot for the country's organic farming programme. It was declared a chemical- and toxin-free agricultural city in 1999. As a result, it has several fascinating sightseeing spots related to organic farming.

Tips & Tricks

- If you're heading to the Thunder Castle Stadium, be sure to top up with a breakfast at Ran Kin nee Khaoman Kai, which has been a beloved Hainanese chicken eatery for over 20 years. Try their tender chicken and rice, which is perfectly completed by their signature sweet soy sauce. It is located at the new Transport Company offices in Satuek district, Buri Ram. It is open daily from 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tel. +668-3100-2777
- Wise visitors heading to Surin (from Buri Ram) make it a point to stop at Ran Pa Noi Mi Yam Thai, which makes authentic Mi Yam Krasang (glass noodle salad), a dish now far too rare. It is open daily from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tel. +668-7964-0683



Festivals

Buri Ram

- Phanom Rung Festival is held in the fifth lunar month of the year (dates vary, so please check) during the full moon.
- I-san Kite Festival is held on the first weekend of every December at the kite competition field in Huai Rat district.
- Candle Festival is held at Prakhon Chai district on the first day of Buddhist Lent each year.
- The Long-boat Racing Festival is held in Satuek district around the end of each year.



Saray Aditaya

is located at Ampuen Reservoir, in Thenmi sub-district, Mueang district, Surin.

It is open daily from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Tel. +666-2391-5906

Saray Aditaya Agricultural Project:

Saray in Khmer means rice paddy, while Aditaya is taken from HRH Princess Aditayadornkitikhun's name. The project holds fast to the principles of sustainability and balance, and was been designated by the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej as a one-stop service. In short, the programme aims to pave the way to develop agricultural techniques and improve the farmers' quality of life, by staying ahead of societal advances.

It has a school for farmers as well as a comprehensive course on rice farming. It also organises demonstrations and rice-growing activities. On its grounds are a flower garden, vegetable garden, accommodation, restaurants and a produce shop... all set in the middle of a tranquil, quiet rice paddy field.

Additional Information

The Tourism Authority of Thailand, Buri Ram Office, is located in Isan sub-district, Mueang Buri Ram district, Buri Ram. Tel.+66-4463-4722-3 Fax. +66-4463-4724 E-mail: tatburiram@tat.or.th

Tourism Authority of Thailand, Surin Office, is located in Nai Mueang sub-district, Mueang Surin district, Surin. Tel. +66-4451-4447-8 Fax. +66-4451-8530 E-mail: tatsurin@tat.or.th



Tips & Tricks

Visitors can stay at a homestay located in the middle of paddy fields.



Satom Organic Farm

is located at Mu 1 Mueang Ling sub-district, Chom Phra district, Surin. Tel. +666-1165-1848, +668-9474-0199



Satom Organic Farm: Learn all about organic rice with a dyed-in-the-wool Surin local, Mr. Suthan Sukhcharit. With the belief that consumers and producers are safer when using nature and natural techniques, he has been passing on his knowledge for years. Satom is a dialect word belonging to the Kuai or Kui people in Surin, meaning “rice paddy by a stream”. Visitors can learn about various rice strains and their benefits, as well as savour a simple leaf-wrapped meal created from homegrown produce and fruit. It’s all served up in a country-style, delicious meal, which is both simple and hearty. For instance, there’s the roast fish chillidip, spicy fish salad (made with fish caught nearby), and more. Three types of organic rice are served: Hommali Komen Surin, Mali Nil Surin, and Phaka Ampuem rice, all of which contain antioxidants that lower depression and anxiety while nourishing the skin.

Refreshing Scents & Sights

Tangtaworn Farm boasts more than 10 types of melons, which it grows to GAP agricultural standards. The Farm grows and sells melons as well as watermelons, hydroponic vegetables, and seasonal flowers. Entrance is free. The restaurant serves food, snacks and drinks made from farm-fresh fruit and vegetables in a relaxed setting.



Tangtaworn Farm

is located in Yawuek sub-district, Chumphon Buri district, Surin. It is open daily from 7 a.m. -5 p.m. (and closes at 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday). Tel. +666-1029-6557

Tips & Tricks

Don't forget to try Prasat Diew brand coconut taffy at Ran Kalamae Sikhorphum store, as well as other local favourites (like sweet sausages) at the Ran Koonchiang Ha Dao store.

Buri Ram-Surin:

Old Traditions, Ancient Volcanoes (3 days, 2 nights)

DAY 1

Pirom La Phirom, Khao Kradong Forest Park, and Chef Plus Bistro



6.05 A.M.

Take off from Don Mueang Airport towards Buri Ram.

7.50 A.M.

Have breakfast at Ran Kin Ni Khaoman Kai near Satuek Municipal Office.

8.40 A.M.

Head towards Ploen La Plern Floral Park to enjoy beautiful decorative flowers, observe a Thai cooking demonstration and shop for souvenirs at the local Ploen La Plern Floating Market.

12 P.M.

Enjoy an I-san-fusion lunch at Ploen La Phirom, made from local ingredients, as well as Ploen La Plern-style pork leg (two-time pork leg competition champion).

1.30 P.M.

Check out the Thunder Castle Stadium as well as its souvenir store for Buriram United keepsakes.

3.40 P.M.

Depart to the Khao Kradong Forest Park to take in the plants and forest, as well as the scenery from the mountain. Walk across the volcanic crater, pay your respects to the Buddha's footprint memorial as well as the Phra Suphathara Bophit Buddha Statue (an iconic city Buddha Statue).

5 P.M.

Go to Chef Plus Café and Bistro for a Eurasian meal by a Buri Ram local, who also happens to be the heir to a real estate company. The gourmand, Mr. Pattana Phongbuppakij, is in love with cooking. Enjoy dinner made with local organic produce; such as, creative dishes like Kung Chom Phat Song Khrneang (pickled shrimp stir-fry), roast pork spare ribs with herbs, pork neck with lava-style spicy dip, and more.

7 P.M.

Head back to your accommodation in Buri Ram. Rest and relax.

DAY 2

Ban Sap Sombun, Ubon Samakkhi Centre and Baan Peet Restaurant

8 A.M.

Have breakfast at the Guangzhou Restaurant in Talat Phothis Phatthana market.

9 A.M.

Head to Non Suwan district.

10.30 A.M.

Visit the mineral springs at Ban Sap Sombun, learn aquaculture and how to use fish traps, how to use shrimp traps and how to prepare mushrooms.

12 P.M.

Enjoy a lunch made of local ingredients and shop for community-made snacks and souvenirs.

1 P.M.

Head to Ban Ubol Samakkhi Village, tour the sacred forest, visit the organic vegetable plot (irrigated with the mineral water), and sample sun-dried bananas.

3 P.M.

Head to Prakhon Chai district.

4 P.M.

Watch a demonstration of how pickled shrimp (Thai: Kung Chom) are made in the special Prakhon Chai way. Shop for Kung Chom snacks and food.

4.45 P.M.

Head to Baan Peet Restaurant for a Thai-I-san dinner, featuring Kung Chom dishes; such as, Lon Kung Chom minced pork dip, stir-fry Phat Kung Chom, spicy Lon Kung Chom salad and Kung Chom omelette.

6.30 P.M.

Return to accommodation in Buri Ram to rest and relax.



DAY 3

Ran Pan Noi Mee Yam Thai Restaurant, Saray Aditaya, Satom Farm, and Elephant Village



7 A.M.

Enjoy breakfast at your accommodation.

9 A.M.

Head to Surin. Learn about agriculture, rice and the traditional way of life at Saray Aditaya, a royal project created in tribute to HRH Princess Aditayadornkitikhun and in line with the principles of sustainability. The project holds to the principles of sustainability and balance; and has been designated by the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej as a one-stop service. In short, the programme aims to pave the way to develop agricultural techniques and improve farmers' quality of life, by staying ahead of societal advances.

11.30 A.M.

Head to Mueang Surin district. Stop by and shop for snacks at Ran Koonchiang Ha Dao.

12.20 P.M.

Head to Satom Organic Farm for a simple, leaf-wrapped lunch made from homegrown produce and ingredients; such as, roast fish chili paste, spicy fish salad and more. Try all three types of organic rice served here: Hommalli Komen Surin, Mali Nil Surin, and Phaka Ampuen rice.

2 P.M.

Learn about organic rice and the benefits of each type of rice with Khun Tan, an organic rice farmer who returned to Surin to pass on his knowledge of farming. His techniques rest on the belief that consumers and producers are safer when using nature and natural techniques. Visit the rice fields, vegetable farm, and the homestay.

3 P.M.

Head to Tangtaworn Farm to see the many types of melons on offer, alongside the toxin-free vegetable plot. Have some snacks and drinks while looking through farm-fresh produce at the store.

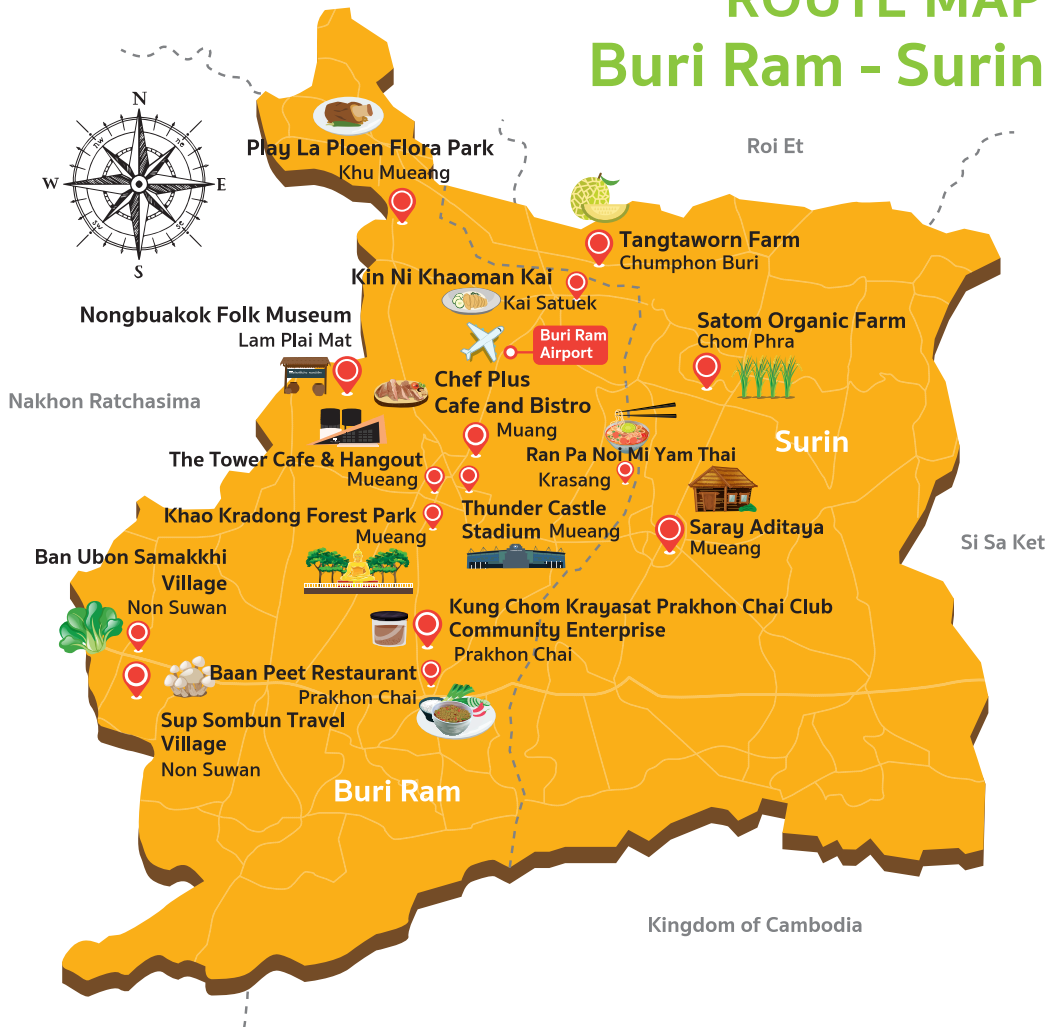
5 P.M.

Head to Buri Ram Airport.

7.10 P.M.

Take off from Buri Ram Airport back to Bangkok. Bon voyage!

ROUTE MAP Buri Ram - Surin



Bueng Kan:

Taste the Beauty of the Mekong Riverside

Sleepy Bueng Kan province has always taken its time when it comes to development, eschewing modern-day construction for the power and grandeur of its gorgeous rivers, streams and forested mountains. It has even earned global renown for the beauty and significance of the Bueng Khong Long wetland and Nong Kut thing wetland.

Bueng Kan's cuisine takes advantage of natural resources at hand, beginning with the fish of the nearby Mekong River. The result is an array of dishes made from fresh ingredients, offering a range of tastes. Add to this, the local skill and care for cooking, and the food here packs a double dose of beauty and scrumptiousness. Can't-be-beat food and great views are why Bueng Kan is a unique addition to any culinary itinerary.





Mekong: Where Flavours & Rivers Meet



The 4,500-km path of the Mekong snakes through six countries in total, as well as four of Bueng Kan's districts. Its deepest spot, known as the "Mekong belly button" is found at Bueng Kan's A-hong Rapids, where Wat Ahong Silawat is located.

The Mekong has long been the connection between Thailand and Lao PDR. Locals on either side live harmoniously, as a family, regardless of political borders. For instance, over three centuries ago, the Lao royal family left Vientiane and sought refuge in Bueng Kan's Ban Ho Kham. They constructed Ho Kham for their residence, and the area soon came to be known also as Ho Kham. Most residents here are descendants of those who moved from Vientiane so long ago. Their homes line the riverside, and they follow a simple way of life centred around Buddhist beliefs. It's common to see most locals waiting outside their homes in the morning to offer monks alms, as part of merit-making.





The local cuisine is full of variety and is centred upon the Mekong River, which is also the main source of water for the area. As a result, over the generations, locals have become experts at special food preservation methods. For instance, to make a fermented fish paste called Pla Ra, they catch barbs only during their egg-laying season and combine this with the husk of young rice (instead of roasted mature rice). As a result, the local Pla Ra is an intense vermilion. Topped with chilis, in the style of Mae Pranieng Teehorkham (a legendary local chef), it turns into a local specialty: Pla Ra Rat Phrik (English: fermented fish paste and chilis), which is a perfect complement to sticky rice as well as steamed rice.



The roaring river is backgrounded by hills and mountains, so gorgeous panoramic views can be enjoyed year-round. During the dry season, farmers will use their empty paddy fields to grow organic produce with natural fertiliser from animal dung. The village is also a hub for giant velvet tamarind snacks. The velvet tamarind (Thai: Luk Yi Yak) is a Laotian tamarind tree which produces larger velvet tamarinds than the Thai species, and has thus become a favoured, must-try snack.



Ban Ho Kham

is located at Mu 1,
Ho Kham sub-district,
Mueang Bueng Kan
district, Bueng Kan.
Tel. +668-5007-2460,
+669-3056-0784
(river cruise reservation)





Happiness of build on the inheritance.

Not far from here is also Ban Sa-gno, on the bank of the Mekong in the northernmost point of Thailand's Northeast region. The riverside clay here was discovered to have unique properties, thanks to the dung from cows, buffalo, elephants and gaur that once drank from the river, long ago. It is also where "Naga fireballs" (balls of flame created by giant serpent deities) can be spotted.

Local expert Somporn Saengkongmee took note of the clay and experimented with it by using it for treating the traditional Thai Pha khao Ma fabric (loincloth). She discovered the clay gave cotton fibre a softness and smoothness, as well as a lovely drape. Her clay-treated fabric, called Pha Khao Ma Dara Nakh uses natural fruit dyes from betel, May apples and golden shower tree bark and peel. She has also created new patterns, each imbued with specific symbols and meaning.



 **Traditional Textile Weaving Centre at Ban Sa-ngo**
is located in Ho Kham sub-district, Mueang Bueng Kan district, Bueng Kan. Tel. +669-1061-2024, +669-5664-7134, +668-4408-2865

Panoramas (and Plates) of Lotuses at Nong Loeng Wetland

Though Phon Charoen district is far from the Mekong riverside, it has its own scenic area to boast: Nong Loeng Wetland. The freshwater preserve, teeming with fish, covers approximately 480 hectares, and is a popular conservationist sightseeing spot. Visitors can take a raft or dinghy out onto the water to take a close-up look at the lotus-covered wetland, then sample the innovative, lotus-based dishes, like coconut lotus curry, or pounded Somtam lotus salad (Somtam is normally made with shredded, unripened papaya). There is also a range of fish dishes.

About 2 km into the Wetland, a long, bamboo bridge stretches 280 m. across the water. Called Saphan Non Sao-Eh Bridge, it traverses a protected area of the Wetland, home to a rich ecosystem as well as the habit of a range of aquatic animals, birds and flora.



Nong Loeng Raft tours

are located in Ban Khok Sawang, Don Ya Nang sub-district, Phon Charoen district, Bueng Kan. Tel. +669-3894-5580



วัดฤๅษีชุมชน
มะม่วงแก้ววิเศษ

A Bustling Community (& Yummy Eats)



For locals here and throughout I-san, Nagas (serpent deities) have long been central to their beliefs and faith. This is also true for Ban Khilek Yai, created by famed food stylist Suthipong “Karb” Suriya. His skills and renown have breathed life back into the area. He uses everyday, household items as a reflection of how life is truly lived in his work.

Nearby is a vegetable garden and an activities field, which is set inside a para rubber plantation, giving visitors an authentic local experience. Wall murals throughout the village are painted in a street art style to depict local Naga beliefs. The artwork is a

collaborative project between the community and the Department of Architecture of King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang. This community is distinctive indeed! Khun Karb, the food stylist, has also created an imaginative Chef's Table menu that brings together endless items: Northeastern sausage, golden apple snails, toasted bread, minced liver, rolled-pork steak served with fermented fish paste and grilled vegetables, and more. Visitors can also opt for more traditional fare made by locals, including marinated steamed fish (Thai: Pla Som), spicy fish dumplings (Thai: Mok Pla), catfish salad (Thai: Lab Pla Buek) and I-san-style tomato chili dip (Thai: Chaeo Makhuea Thet). Either way, it's certainly an unforgettable experience.



Life Community Museum Bueng Kan

is located in So Phisai district in Bueng Kan. It is open daily from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tel. +668-6229-7626 (Please reserve ahead of time for meals).




Tips & Tricks

On Saturdays, a sustainable community market springs up.





Souvenirs from the Heart

 The lives of Bueng Kan locals are still inextricably intertwined with nature. This comes through in their delicious cuisine, which showcases a variety of local ingredients as well as traditional recipes.

Yuengyang Yangyuen Restaurant: The way to the heart is through the stomach, as we often say. Sasivimol “Paew” Boonthae takes this on with fervour, showing just as much care and love for the food here as her mother did for her. The restaurant has a homey garden setting in a quiet community. It serves up high quality ingredients that are either home-grown or bought from local farmers. The dishes combine these fresh ingredients with Sasivimol’s mother’s recipes, which range from fried fish and herbs, steamed chicken and tamarind leaf, tender bamboo shoot soup, and more. The dessert menu is ever-changing, too. In addition to being a masterful cook, Sasivimol’s mother is also an expert at confections and desserts, as well as garland making. Visitors can book a class by calling ahead of time.



Yuengyang Yangyuen Restaurant

is on the street next to Phon Charoen District Office in Bueng Kan. It is open daily from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Tel. +668-6222-7672

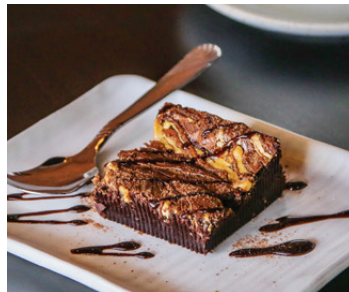
The One Restaurant: Set inside The One Hotel, this restaurant welcomes visitors with a range of dishes made from quality organic ingredients from its coconut plantation, nearby garden or local rice farmers (who grow produce on their riverside fields during the dry season). The dishes are a fusion of traditional Northeastern fare and more modern interpretations; such as, Somtam (shredded papaya salad) that uses young sunflower stalks instead of papaya (Thai: Somtam Ton-on (Thantawan)). Or, try deep fried spring rolls stuffed with fried pork salad (Thai: PoPia Lap Mu Thot), spare rib soup with tender coconut flesh (Thai: Tom Saep Sikhrong mu Maphrao On) and tasty marinated steamed fish (Thai: Pla Nin Nueng Chaeo). The dishes are as nutritious as they are pretty, and they are a great way to give back to the local farmers and the community.



The One Hotel

is located on Bueng Kan-Nakhon Phanom Road in Mueang Bueng Kan district, Bueng Kan. It is open daily from 6 a.m. - 11 p.m. Tel. +66-4249-2234

Roo Seuk Dee Café&Studio: This cosy coffee shop is near the clock tower roundabout (Thai: Wongwian Ho Nalika). It serves tea, coffee and a variety of inventive beverages (like durian lattes, mango tea, pandan leaf Americano and more) in a retro-style setting. Homemade cookies and brownies are also a treat.



Roo Seuk Dee Café&Studio

is located on Bueng Kan-Phang Khon Road in Mueang Bueng Kan district, Bueng Kan. It is open on weekdays from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Tel. +668 2704-1943



Tips & Tricks

Phu Thok is a religious place, so be sure to dress politely (shoulders and knees covered) and behave respectfully.

A Land of Nature & Spirituality

Phu Thok is a place for Buddhist monks and all those who wish to learn more. The temple and Buddhist centre was founded by the venerable Phra Achan Juan Kulachettho (in Thai, the honorific “Phra Achan” is only given to highly respected monks). He discovered the tranquil area during one of his walking pilgrimages, and in 1969, founded Wat Phu Thok. Locals and monks worked together to build a 360-degree platform-bridge that winds around the mountain, resulting in a total of 7 levels of the bridge. The endeavour took 5 years to finish - a testament to the power of faith.

The centre’s strict regimens and rules add to the feeling of magic and nature, and also is proof of the strength of the body and mind. The journey from the foot of the bridge, spiraling upwards to the seventh level, is far from easy. The platform narrows at points and one’s legs begin to shake. But at the top, visitors are treated to a lush, dense forest, a symbol of the fruit that Buddhist precepts can bring to their daily lives.

Additional Information

Tourism Authority of Thailand, Udon Thani Office (covering Udon Thani, Nong Khai and Bueng Kan) is located on Muk Montri Road, Mak Khaeng sub-district, Mueang district, Udon Thani.
Tel. +66-4232-5406-7 Fax. +66-4232-5408 E-mail: tatudon@tat.or.th

Festivals

Festivals

- Bun Khao Chi Festival takes place at Wat Photharam in Ban Tha Khrai, Bueng Kan district, Mueang Bueng Kan district, Bueng Kan.
- Bun Phawet Thet Mahachat is held every March at Wat Wat Thep Nimit, Phorn Charoen district.
- The annual long-boat races take place every September on the Mekong River, in Bueng Kan district, Bueng Kan.



Wat Phu Thok

is located in Ban Kham Khaen Phathana in Na Sabaeng sub-district, Si Wilai district, Bueng Kan. It is open every day from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Tel. +66-4232-5406-7

Another way to enjoy Bueng Kan's magnificent nature is to head to the Phu Sing National Reserved Forest, which consists of Pa Dongdip Kala, Pa Phu Sing and Pa Dong Si Chomphu. The sunrise views are incomparable here because of the gigantic rock formations, called Hin Sam Wan. Three enormous cliffs lie in a line, each at least 75 million years old. From a high angle, they look like a pod of whales - perhaps a mother, father and calf - swimming in an ocean of trees. It's a powerful way to begin a day indeed. Phu Sing has 10 or more such viewpoints, like Hin Hua Chang (which looks like an elephant's head) and Sang Roi Bo (a cliff covered in fascinating holes). Travel through the park can only be done on a four-wheel-drive vehicle, which is available for hire from locals. Pak Khat district is yet another demonstration of the power of nature in the province. It lies next to the Mekong River and has million-year-old rock formations, where Wat Sawang Arom is located (also known as Wat Tham Si Thon). It is recounted in an ancient tale that once upon a time, Prince Si Thon, the son of King Athittya-wong of Pancha Nakhorn city-state, followed the beautiful Manora to this spot. Here, he studied magic with a wise hermit. He tested his newfound prowess by enchanting a sword and striking a giant rock three times. This split the rock into three rock fragments - which we can see today. And there, upon one of the rocks, is the tranquil Wat Si Thon.



Tips & Tricks

Travel through the park can only be done on a four-wheel-drive vehicle, which is available for hire from locals.




Celebrating Goodness: Bun Khao Chi Festival

Khao Chi is sold everywhere in the I-san (Northeastern) region. It's also the main symbol of a traditional alms-giving ceremony called Tak Bat Khao Chee or Bun Khao Chi which is held every year in the third lunar month (the dates therefore change each year). Locals come out in force to donate rice and dry food to monks, as well as the traditional Khao Chee, which represents the goodness inherent in people from all walks of life. It's also an expression of respect and worth for rice. Finally, it is an opportunity to shore up good fortune as the rice-planting season approaches. During the days leading up to the festival, locals cheerfully take part in a Khao Chi competition for the most delicious variation.

Bueng Kan Breakfasts

Bueng Kan locals enjoy breakfast quite similar to the rest of the region. Small shops sell a rice noodle soup called Khao Piak or Kuai Chap Yuan; for instance, Ban Khao Piak Restaurant. A lighter range of dishes is usually preferred; such as, pan-braised egg and congee. Morning visitors arriving at Udon Thani International Airport can make a quick stop for breakfast on the outer ring road of Udon Thani town before making their way to Bueng Kan.

 **Ban Khao Piak (Ban Ton) Shop**
is located on Thanon Wisit Road, Mueang district, Bueng Kan. It is open every day from 6 a.m. - noon. Tel. +669 0969 9818



BuengKan :

Fresh Flavours on the Bank of the Mekong River (3 days, 2 nights)

DAY 1

Life Community Museum and Yuenyang Yangyuen Restaurant

6 A.M.

Depart from the Don Muang International Airport in Bangkok to Udon Thani.

7.30 A.M.

Enjoy breakfast at Saen Rak Restaurant.

8.30 A.M.

Head to Bueng Kan province.

10.30 A.M.

Visit the Life Community Museum Bueng Kan and have lunch.

2 P.M.

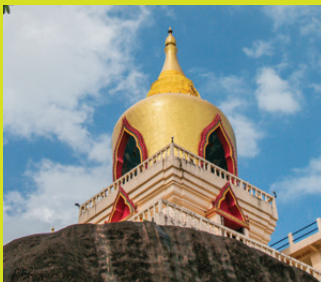
Depart for Phon Charoen district.

3 P.M.

Peruse crafts and souvenirs, then enjoy dinner at the Yuenyang Yangyuen Restaurant.

6.30 P.M.

Head back to your accommodation in Phorn Charoen district.



88 I-San Coolinary

DAY 2

Don Ya Nang sub-district, Phu Thok and Ban Ho Kham



8 A.M.

Have breakfast at your Accommodation.

9 A.M.

Head to Don Ya Nang sub-district. Visit the Non Sao Eh Bridge.

10.20 A.M.

Hire a raft to explore the Nong Loeg Wetland. Enjoy lunch on the raft.

1 P.M.

Head to Phu Thok to observe the beautiful scenery.

3.30 P.M.

Go to Ban Sa-ngo to peruse and shop for the local special clay-treated fabric.

5.20 P.M.

Head to Ban Ho Kham to browse and buy snacks made from giant velvet tamarind. Have dinner by the Mekong River.

6.20 P.M.

Take a sunset boat cruise.

7.30 P.M.

Return to your accommodation in town.

DAY 3

Phu Sing, The One Restaurant and Wat Along



4.30 A.M.

Head to Phu Sing in time for the beautiful sunrise.

8 A.M.

Return to town.

9 A.M.

Have breakfast at the Ban Khao Piak Restaurant

10 A.M.

Have a cup of coffee at the Roo Seuk Dee Café & Studio.

10.45 A.M.

Return to your accommodation for rest and relaxation.

12 P.M.

Head to Wat Along Silawat. Visit the "belly button" of the Mekong River.

1.30 P.M.

Go to the Udon Thani International Airport.

5.05 P.M.

Depart on a flight to Bangkok. Bon Voyage!



ROUTE MAP Bueng Kan

The Lao People's
Democratic Republic







 www.tourismthailand.org/tourismproduct

 [teevvithan.com](https://www.facebook.com/teevvithan.com)

Tourism Authority of Thailand (Head Office)

1600 New Phetchaburi Road, Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400, THAILAND

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