

# LAOS PRESENTS ITS TOURISM ATTRACTIONS



Laos promoted its tourism at ITB 2009. The country may offer unique experience to eco tourists as well as to people interested in culture.

Laos further promoted its growing tourism sector at the ITB (International Tourism Bourse) in Berlin. The Lao Association of Travel Agents presented here “New Responsible Tourism Products” brochure which features new attractions, tours, destinations, and cookery as well as craft courses. According to the Vice Chairman of the **Lao National Tourism Administration**, Mr. Soukaseum Bodhisane, the tourist board applies sustainable tourism development policy in order to preserve the country as a pristine and beautiful tourism destination. Laos develops its sustainable tourism in ways that will be of benefit to the local socio-economic situation and that will also help the natural and cultural heritage conservation.

**Ecotourism** is quite a fast developing sector of the Lao tourism industry and the country has a huge potential in this industry thanks to its pristine nature. As the popularity of ecotourism grows among tourists there emerge new possibilities for development. The country features mountains, rainforests and there is also the Mekong River. All these attraction make the country an ideal spot for eco or adventure tourism.

There is, however, also something for people who are interested in culture and history. Among the main attractions in this field is undoubtedly the town of Luang Prabang. The town combines French colonial architecture, Buddhist Temples and other Lao buildings. Since its proclamation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995 no building in downtown may go above two stories in height. The second and last Lao UNESCO World Heritage Site is Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape. The communist country is open to international tourists only since 1989 and its relations with the USA normalized only in 2004. Nevertheless, tourism is the fastest growing sector in Laos. The economic crisis has somehow slowed down the growth but Laos still manages to lure new tourists.

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