

LAOS EASES ENTRY VISA POLICY TO ATTRACT TOURISTS



Laos is strategically enhancing its tourism sector. This year, the country unveiled the ambitious 'Visit Laos 2024' program to attract more international tourists in 2024 and 2025. The program showcases Laos' unique culture, lifestyle, and entrepreneurial opportunities. The country also facilitates the entry visa policy.

The Lao government's proactive measures are designed to revitalize and fortify the tourism industry, a vital component of the country's economy.

The Minister of Information, Culture, and Tourism in Laos, Suanesavan Vignaketh, has **announced temporary visa facilitations that will be in effect from July 1 to December 31, 2024**. These changes are intended to empower international visitors with more flexible travel planning and stay options.

Citizens of China, including those from Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, can enjoy visa-free travel to Laos for up to 15 days. This exemption applies to travelers in groups organized by officially registered and licensed travel agencies approved by the Laotian Ministry of Tourism.

This policy aims to attract more Chinese visitors, who already constitute a substantial portion of the tourist arrivals in Laos, following Thailand and Vietnam. In 2023, over 641,000 tourists from China visited Laos. However, Taiwanese nationals still need to obtain a visa upon arrival, which must be returned upon departure.

The duration of stay for a multiple-entry visa has been increased from 30 to 60 days. Citizens of 22 countries can now apply for multiple-entry visas through Laos' diplomatic missions. However, if the visa is applied for on arrival or online, visitors will only be allowed a single entry for up to 60 days. The new visa policy applies to citizens from Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Canada, Russia, and several European countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK).

Tourists from Thailand traveling with specific documents such as "Border Pass" or "Temporary Border Pass" can now stay in Laos for up to 10 days, an increase from the previous maximum of 3 days. Similarly, Vietnamese citizens with comparable documents can remain for up to 15 days. Additionally, tourists from these countries arriving in Laos through approved travel agencies can visit three neighboring provinces near their original point of arrival. However, they must depart the country through the same border crossing they entered.

Citizens from certain European countries, such as Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Spain, and Greece, can visit Laos visa-free for up to 15 days for tourism.

The easing of entry visa policy measures reflects Laos' desire to strengthen its position as an attractive tourist destination. Tourism is an important contributor to the country's economic development. The authorities expect a significant number of visitors due to these changes.

Date: 2024-07-08

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/laos-changes-its-entry-visa-policy-news14523>