

Mekong Tourism

NEWSLETTER

About the Mekong Tourism Coordinating

About the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office

The iconic Mekong River unites the six nations that make up the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS).

The governments of Cambodia, Yunnan and Guangxi provinces in China (PRC), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam established the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO) in 2006 as a tourism collaboration framework to coordinate activities that boost tourism's contribution to inclusive economic growth and environmental sustainability in the GMS.

MTCO's work is guided by the GMS Tourism Working Group (TWG), which is made of senior representatives of the National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) of the six member countries. [More information here.](#)



Why climate change can be a springboard for sustainable tourism in the Mekong



Landscape of Guilin, Guangxi, China Image courtesy of aphostory

We're entering into the dry season for the Lower Mekong River Basin. The cool months between December and May represent peak tourist season for destinations around the region, a welcome opportunity for businesses coming out of the long tourism drought of the past two years.

There's reason for concern, too. Dry seasons over the past couple of years have been more arid than usual: 2021 was the 9th driest year on record in the Mekong Basin. Experts worry that the 2022 dry season will be even more intense, with negative impacts on agricultural activity.

The effects of climate change affect all of us around the Mekong – from food, to infrastructure, and even tourism. Unpredictable river levels due to climate change may have an impact on Mekong cruise tourism; rising prices for food may put struggling tourism enterprises out of business.

However, tourism is also a driver of climate change: the global tourist

industry alone is responsible for 8% of the world's carbon emissions. Tourism in the Mekong Subregion must find a balance, attracting more tourists without growing the industry's environmental footprint.

Countries around the Mekong have sprung to action: from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) [promoting the Carbon Neutral Tourism sector](#) to Viet Nam's resort town of Hoi An [piloting five green tourism models](#), local initiatives are helping to usher in a more environmentally friendly, locally sustainable model of tourism that faces the challenge of climate change head-on. GMS countries are also actively collaborating to tackle climate change issues. The [Cambodia Low-carbon Demonstration Zone in Sihanoukville](#) and the [China-Laos Saysettha Low-Carbon Demonstration Zone](#) are just a few examples of this ongoing trans-national effort.

For more updates on climate change and sustainable tourism in the Mekong Subregion and other related developments, read the rest of this newsletter!

GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION COVID-19 TRAVEL POLICIES

The nations in the Greater Mekong Subregion have opened up to foreign visitors. Read the summaries below for the update.



	Laos	Myanmar	Laos PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Viet Nam
International travel status	Fully open for tourism	Visits for tourism purposes restricted	Fully open for tourism	Fully open for tourism	Fully open for tourism	Fully open for tourism
Quarantine requirements	None	7 days quarantine regardless of vaccination status	None	Quarantine for unvaccinated/partially vaccinated travelers; RT-PCR test on third day, quarantine ends with negative results	None	None
Vaccinated visitors: screening procedures	None for visitors showing proof of vaccination	Regardless of vaccination status, visitors must take two nucleic acid tests 48 hours before their flight and one antigen test 12 hours before boarding	None for visitors showing proof of vaccination	Regardless of vaccination status, visitors must take Antigen Rapid Test (ATK) upon arrival; must bear 15,000 MMK (US\$8) cost	None	None, regardless of vaccination status
Unvaccinated visitors: screening procedures	Must take ATK upon arrival; must bear US\$ 5 cost	Unvaccinated travelers are not allowed to enter	Must show negative ATK results taken 48 hours before travel	Must show negative ATK results taken 48 hours before travel	None	None, regardless of vaccination status
Additional requirements		Some provinces require additional quarantine upon arrival		COVID-19 insurance from Myanmar Insurance		PC-Covid mobile app and COVID-19 insurance (US\$10,000 minimum cover)
Restrictions	Mask use voluntary, not required in public spaces	Masks required in public spaces	Masks required in public spaces	Masks required in public spaces	Mask use voluntary, not required in public spaces	Masks required in public spaces

NEWS FROM THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION



CAMBODIA



- It's camping season and it is cool in Cambodia - find the best places to go camping. [More information here.](#)
- Eco-tourism key to post-Covid recovery - seven key recommendations from Minister of Tourism. [More information here.](#)

CHINA

- Songtsam announces new bird watching tours in Northwest Yunnan. [More information here.](#)
- Ecological "redlines" policy triple China's protected waterbird sites. [More information here.](#)



LAO PDR



- Lao PDR's Luang Prabang named among easiest places to travel in Southeast Asia. [More information here.](#)
- Thai AirAsia is increasing flights from Bangkok to Vientiane and Luang Prabang in Laos. [More information here.](#)

MYANMAR

- Tourist arrivals in Myanmar double in seven months from April to November 2022. [More information here.](#)
- Myanmar resumes five-day hot air balloon festival in Pyin Oo Lwin after 2-year hiatus. [More information here.](#)



THAILAND



- Thailand presents 'Responsible Tourism for Sustainability' direction at APEC CEO Summit 2022. [More information here.](#)
- TAT's Feel Thailand initiative highlights expanded access to Thailand for U.S. travelers. [More information here.](#)

VIET NAM

- Ba Ria-Vung Tau province, known for Con Dao Island, is aiming to promote ecotourism. [More information here.](#)
- Inaugural Autumn Colors of Ba Be Lake festival in Bac Kan Province celebrates local culture. [More information here.](#)

