

MEKONG TOURISM NEWSLETTER

Issue: March 2024



Redefining Tomorrow's Travel: Mekong Tourism Forum 2024 to Kick Off in Lijiang

There's a place for you here, if you're a travel professional or stakeholder from the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS): the Mekong Tourism Forum (MTF) 2024 will take place on 23-25 April in the historic city of Lijiang, China PRC.

This year, MTF2024 hopes to inspire delegates to explore new forms of tourism that deliver economic benefits, environmental consciousness and cultural enrichment. This is evident in the theme: "Visionary Journeys Redefining Tomorrow's Travel".

Over 200 tourism professionals and stakeholders are expected to attend MTF2024: including tourism Ministers, leaders, NTOs, NGOs, and private sector representatives.

Highlights will include a keynote speech that will offer a glimpse into the future of GMS travel; two concurrent panel sessions, one addressing strategies for strengthening cross-border cooperation and another highlighting how cultural integration leads to prosperity. The delegates will also have the chance to gain local cultural experiences and learn about the smart destination management system at the UNESCO Heritage Site of Lijiang's Old Town, and visit the famous Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, Blue Moon Valley, and enjoy the magnificent 'Impression of Lijiang' show.

Do you also have a stake in the future of GMS tourism? Learn more and register at mekongtourism.org; registration closes on April 8, 2024, or when all spots are filled. Register early to ensure you have a voice in the discussion!

Regional Spotlight: Nan, Thailand

Life in Nan is pretty relaxed: ideal for those seeking the slow life. Take in local culture via the Nan National Museum and the Rim Nan Art Gallery. Or roam the downtown area on a bicycle, visiting highlights like Wat Phumin and the century-old Nan Noble House. The Hok Peng Festival from 18-24 March showcases a dazzling variety of Buddhist ceremonies and cultural activities. ([Amazing Thailand](#))

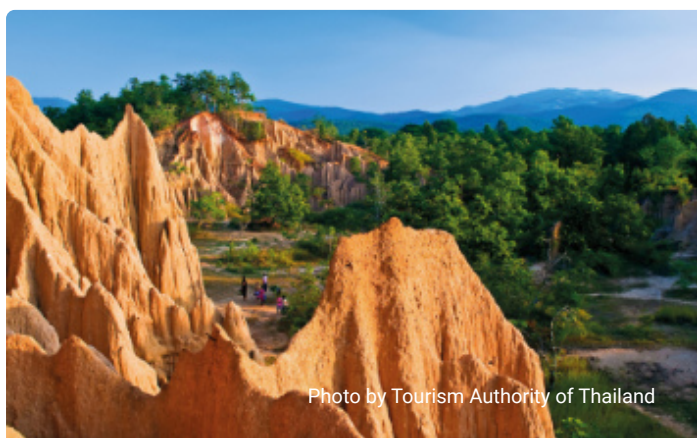


Photo by Tourism Authority of Thailand

Sustainable Tourism News



Why Thailand picked two communities for its first “Amazing Organic” trips

As part of efforts to support the Organic Tourism movement in Thailand, the Tourism Authority of Thailand now promotes “Amazing Organic Trip” routes around Mae Tha Organic, Chiang Mai and Ban Bang Rong Community, Phuket.

[Read more.](#)



Cambodia Ministry of Environment Launches Green Destination Target Project

The Ministry of Environment has launched the Green Destination Target Project for Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Cambodia, the Minister of Environment announced on Feb. 12.

[Read more.](#)



Viet Nam advised to promote development of forest-based ecotourism

Boasting great resources of forest and forest land, Viet Nam is advised to develop forest ecosystem services, especially forest-based ecotourism to create jobs and improve incomes for locals, contributing to sustainable poverty reduction among mountainous communities.

[Read more.](#)

Upcoming Festivals

16-18 March 2024

River Festival, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

The Mekong River Festival was created to promote eco-tourism along the mighty river. The eighth River Festival will be held in Siem Reap, and features cultural programs and sporting competitions centered around the Mekong. After sight-seeing on the river, visitors can watch a boat race, or join a fun run for charity where you can also help local communities. ([Khmer Times](#))



18-24 March 2024

Hok Peng Festival, Nan, Thailand.

Held annually on the full moon of the sixth Northern Thai lunar month, the “Hok Peng Festival to Worship Phra That Chao Phu Phiang Chae Haeng” features a wide range of Buddhist activities, centered around its [namesake temple](#). Tourists can visit markets and street stalls selling Nan food and handicrafts; and enjoy folk performances, cultural processions, and competitions.

([TAT Newsroom](#))



24 March 2024

Shwedagon Pagoda Festival, Yangon, Myanmar.

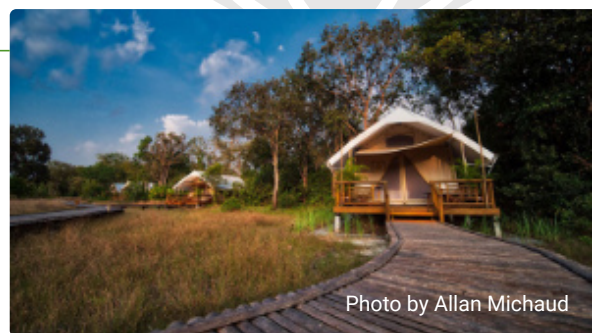
Held annually during the full moon day of the month of Tabaung, this festival is one of the largest temple festivals in Myanmar. Come to watch locals reciting prayers with the monks at the famous golden stupa in Yangon that is rumored to contain strands of hair of the Lord Buddha. A marvelous carnival atmosphere pervades the temple during the festival, with plenty of local color. ([Myanmar Tourism Ministry](#))



News from the Greater Mekong Subregion

Cambodia

- ◆ New government circulars to continue tax incentives in Cambodia's tourism sector.
[Read more.](#)
- ◆ Glamping embracing sustainability in Cambodia - "all the joys of camping without giving up luxuries and comforts".
[Read more.](#)



China

- ◆ Tourism and poverty alleviation programs help De'ang people prosper in China's Yunnan Province.
[Read more.](#)
- ◆ Guangxi to boost ASEAN standardization and agricultural cooperation, enhancing regional productivity.
[Read more.](#)

Lao PDR

- ◆ Lao PDR achieves a new milestone in gender equality, securing the fifth position in the Global Gender Gap Index 2023 for "economic participation and opportunity".
[Read more.](#)
- ◆ The Laos-China Railway boosts daily trips to 12, supporting the anticipated tourism surge for Visit Laos 2024.
[Read more.](#)



Myanmar

- ◆ Nine new destinations in Yangon designated to boost tourism and relieve crowding.
[Read more.](#)
- ◆ Kawthaung-Ranong Friendship Tourism Festival from 4 to 8 February boosts Myanmar-Thailand ties.
[Read more.](#)

Thailand

- ◆ Thailand launches medical coverage scheme for tourists under new campaign, with accident medical coverage of up to US\$13,900.
[Read more.](#)
- ◆ TAT and WWF Thailand reinforce their commitment to the 'Travel Ivory Free' campaign, promoting responsible tourism and combating illegal ivory trade.
[Read more.](#)



Viet Nam

- ◆ Vietnam's initiative to plant 1 billion trees by 2025 sees significant progress with over 15 million trees planted in Quang Tri, enhancing forest coverage.
[Read more.](#)
- ◆ The Hanoi Women for Peace and Development Festival 2024 celebrates the city's achievements in peace and creativity, promoting gender equality and women's progress.
[Read more.](#)