

# Mekong Tourism

# NEWSLETTER

Issue: July 2024



Photo credit: Intentional Travelers

## The Mekong's Sports Tourism Scene – Let the Games Begin!

The Paris Olympics kicks off this month – with all eyes on sports for the next few months, it's a good time to consider the Greater Mekong Sub-Region's enthusiastic embrace of sports tourism.

The global sports tourism market was [worth an estimated USD 587.81 billion](#) in 2023. This tourism sector comprises about 10% of the world's expenditure on tourism, enjoying an estimated growth rate of 17.5% between 2023-2030.

But it's not just about dollars and cents. For many countries – including our neighbors in the GMS – global sports events are an opportunity to raise their international profiles. Sports events shine a light on their venues, whether we're talking about the [Angkor Empire Marathon](#) or a [World Muaythai Federation](#) championship bout.

Viet Nam, for one, has gone all in on [promoting golf tourism](#) to international golfers – touting its new golf courses built in locations with unique geographical locations and topography.

In Guangxi, China PR, [the autonomous region has designated](#) the Baili Liujiang Sports Tourism Demonstration Base and Yulong River Leisure Sports Tourism Resort as national demonstration bases for sports tourism.

Finally, Thailand has [introduced a 90-day Muay Thai education visa](#), easing the path for martial arts enthusiasts to study Muay Thai in the Kingdom.

It's a great time to be a sports tourist amidst the Mekong countries, with equal parts investment and enthusiasm for sports tourism at an all-time high. Game on!

## Regional spotlight: Da Nang, Viet Nam

Central Viet Nam is a favorite stomping ground for international golfers – and who can blame them? The towering karst peaks, vibrant green rice paddies and scenic coastline make for a wonderful backdrop for tees and long drives – all quite accessible from Da Nang, Central Viet Nam's international gateway. With beaches to the east, mountains to the west, and friendly residents, Da Nang is well worth the visit even if you're not hitting the links.

[\(vietnam.travel\)](#)

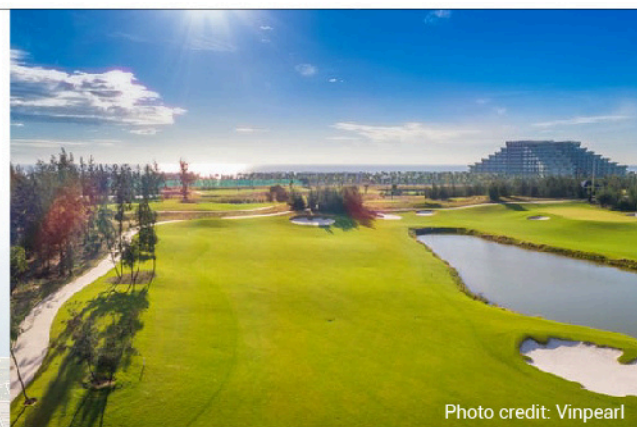


Photo credit: Vinpearl

## Sustainable Tourism News



### Cambodia govt and JTI sign MoU for sustainable development

Cambodia's Ministry of Environment and JTI signed an MoU to enhance environmental conservation and sustainable development, highlighting JTI's commitment to corporate responsibility and the nation's eco-logical progress.

[Read more](#)



### Quảng Nam embraces ecotourism model, with plenty of community support

Quảng Nam expands ecotourism appeal; majority of the 233,000 visitors chose eco-tourism packages.

[Read more](#)



### TAT's 'Eco-Discovery' event promotes sustainable Thai tourism

TAT's 'Eco-Discovery' event highlights Thailand's award-winning sustainable tourism efforts, engaging travel professionals and influencers to enhance the country's eco-friendly image.

[Read more](#)

## Upcoming Festivals



13 July

### Da Nang International Firework Festival (Grand Finale), Viet Nam.

Da Nang International Fireworks Festival makes its triumphant return this 2024 summer. The venue covers both the Han River Port area for the fireworks display and the Tran Hung Dao Street sidewalk area designated for artistic performances. The grand finale will take place on the evening of July 13 with the theme "Made of Young Generation". ([vietnam.travel](http://vietnam.travel))

20 July

### Full Moon Day of Waso (Start of Buddhist Lent), Myanmar.

Waso is celebrated to honour the three turning points of Siddhartha Gautama's life to become Lord Buddha. During the festival, Buddhist followers donate robes and other items to the monks in the monasteries as a part of the merit-making ritual. Monks and nuns spend the entire rainy season meditating and teaching sermons.

([tourism.gov.mm](http://tourism.gov.mm))



17 - 23 July

### Ubun Ratchathani Candle Festival, Thailand.

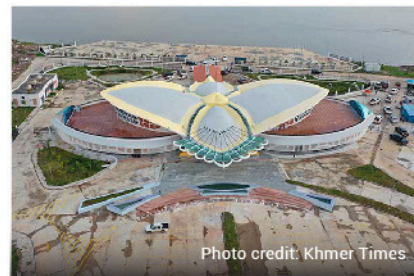
To mark Khao Phansa, or the start of the three-month Buddhist Lent period, the city of Ubun Ratchathani parades beautiful and intricately carved candle sculptures through town. The parade moves from the front of Wat Si Ubun Rattanaram to the park of Thung Si Muang, before the candles are finally presented to temples. ([Tourism Authority of Thailand](http://Tourism Authority of Thailand))



# News from the Greater Mekong Subregion

## Cambodia

- Cambodia's Kampot International Tourism Port opens in Q3 2024, enhancing regional connectivity and local tourism. [Read more](#)
- Cambodia's new digital entry process goes live on 1 July, with all visitors required to complete an e-Arrival Card application within seven days before arrival. [Read more](#)



## China

- China's Dragon Boat Festival sees a surge in "new Chinese-style travel," featuring cultural and heritage experiences, boosting domestic tourism. [Read more](#)
- Dongxing city on China PR-Viet Nam border in Guangxi thrives with vibrant cross-border tourism. [Read more](#)

## Lao PDR

- Lao PDR implements visa-free policy for Chinese visitors in second half of 2024, only for tourist groups accompanied by travel agents. [Read more](#)
- Luang Namtha Province enhances tourist sites with new attractions, festivals, and activities to attract more visitors. [Read more](#)

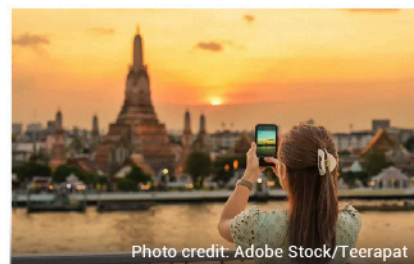


## Myanmar

- Myanmar is working to get Mount Popa National Geopark listed as a UNESCO Global Geopark to boost tourism and local economy. [Read more](#)
- Conservation research to continue for majority of complexes in Bagan Ancient Cultural Heritage Zone. [Read more](#)

## Thailand

- Thailand cancels the 300 baht tourism fee to boost economic impact through increased tourist spending. [Read more](#)
- TAT organises Ignite Tourism Thailand: TAT Skill Factory workshop to upskill workers in the tourism sector. [Read more](#)



## Viet Nam

- Indie travel news source Travel Off Path lists Viet Nam as the safest country to visit in Asia for 2024. [Read more](#)
- Sa Đéc Flower Village and other attractions promoting agritourism as a new model for Mekong Delta. [Read more](#)