

# Laos

Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) is a landlocked, mountainous country that is widely covered with tropical rainforests. It is bordered by China and Myanmar to the north, Cambodia to the south, Vietnam to the east and Thailand to the west.

## Overview

### Official Name

Lao People's Democratic Republic

### Capital

Vientiane

### Independence Day

2 December 1975

## Population, Territory and Currency

### Population & total area

7,852,377 (2023 est.)

236,800 square km

*Source: CIA World*

*Factbook*

### Currency

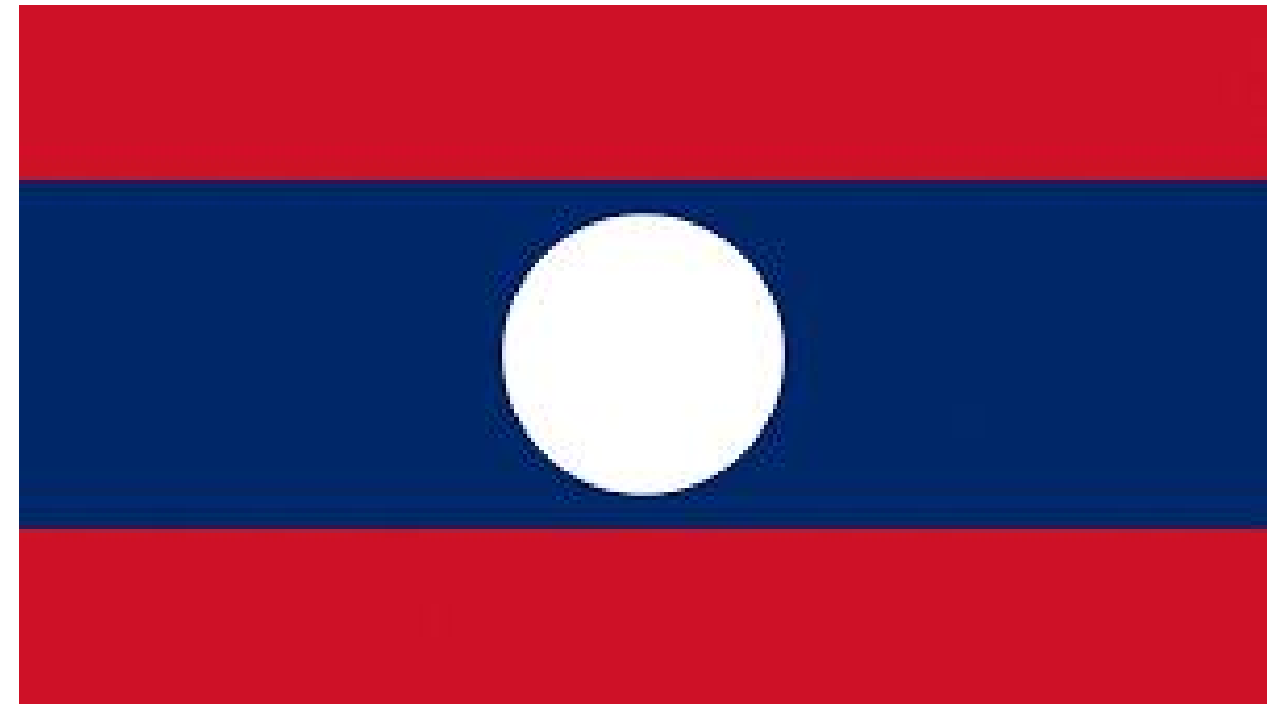
Lao Kip (LAK)

Average price per meal:

SGD 4.90

## The Flag

The flag of Laos consists of 3 horizontal stripes, with the middle blue stripe being twice the height of the top and bottom red stripes. In the middle is a white disc representing the moon shining over the Mekong River. The Blue stripe represents wealth, and the red represents the blood shed during the internal struggle for freedom.



## Key Historical Events

**1893**

Laos becomes a French protectorate.

**1973**

Vientiane ceasefire agreement divides Laos between the communists and the royalists.

**1989**

First elections held since 1975. All candidates have to be approved by the LPRP. Communists retain power.

**2013**

Laos joins the WTO.

**1954**

Laos gains full independence as a constitutional monarchy. Civil war breaks out between royalists and the communist group, the Pathet Lao.

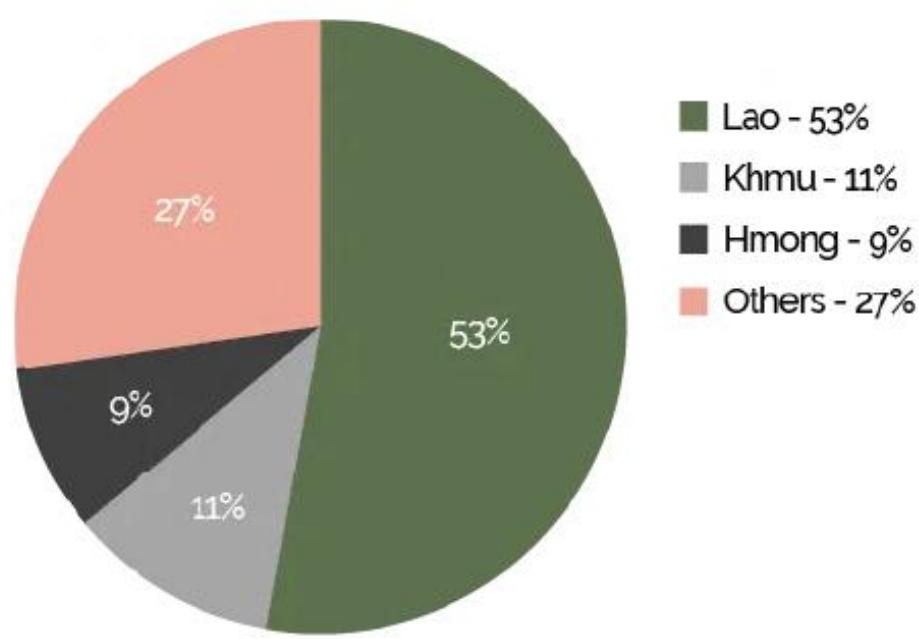
**1975**

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is proclaimed.

**1997**

Laos becomes a member of ASEAN.

## Demographics



**Male-Female:**  
**49.7%-50.3%**

**Urban Population:**  
**37.6%**

**Youth aged 15-24 years:** **20.6%**

*Source: CIA World Factbook (2023)*

## Economic Profile

Lao PDR's economy is set to grow by 3.8% in 2022. Lao's economy has continued its recovery in 2023, with GDP growth forecast at 3.7%, up from 2.7% in 2022 (WorldBank, 2023). The economy has recently benefited from high foreign investment in hydropower, mining, and construction. Growth is driven by the expansion of infrastructure-related construction activities, such as road systems and internal landline communications.

## Key Industries

### Mining

Laos is considered one of Asia's most resource-rich nations due to the wealth of resources like lead, copper and gold. In 2022, a newly discovered gold mine will allow gold and ore production to increase significantly, from 400,000 tonnes in 2023 to 1.2 million tonnes per annum thereafter.

### Tourism

One of the most important industries, earning vast amounts of foreign exchange and contributing almost USD 2 billion to its GDP. In 1995, about 350,000 international tourists visited Laos, and that number grew to more than 4 million in 2018.

### Agriculture

Subsistence agriculture, dominated by rice cultivation in lowland areas, accounted for about 16.21% of GDP in 2020. About 73% of Lao people are employed in the agriculture industry.

## Local Food

### Larb

Widely considered as Lao's national dish, this meat-based salad is flavoured with mint leaves, chili, fish sauce, and lime juice.



Larb

### Lam

A mildly spicy and thick Lao stew containing beans, eggplant, lemongrass, basil, chili, mushrooms and cilantro.



Lam

### Khao Poon

A comfort food in Laos consisting of rice vermicelli noodles in spicy soup, which is made of meat, fish sauce, garlic, chili, lime and galangal.



Khao Poon

## Places of Interest

### Kuang Si Waterfall

Three-tiered waterfall

A favorite side trip for tourists in Luang Prabang, the waterfalls begin in shallow pools atop a steep hillside and lead to the main fall with a drop of 60 meters, flowing into a turquoise blue pool.



Kuang Si Waterfall



Pha That Luang Vientiane

## **Pha That Luang Vientiane**

### Great Stupa

A gold-covered large Buddhist stupa in the centre of the city of Vientiane, it is regarded as the most important national monument in Laos and a national symbol.

## **Major Festivals**

### **Boat Racing Festival**

This annual festival takes place nation wide and runs for about 6 weeks, from August to October. It is the most cheerful festival in Laos, with family and friends gathering along the riverbanks to watch the boat races. The competitions are usually sponsored by large organisations and broadcasted on national television.



Boat Racing Festival