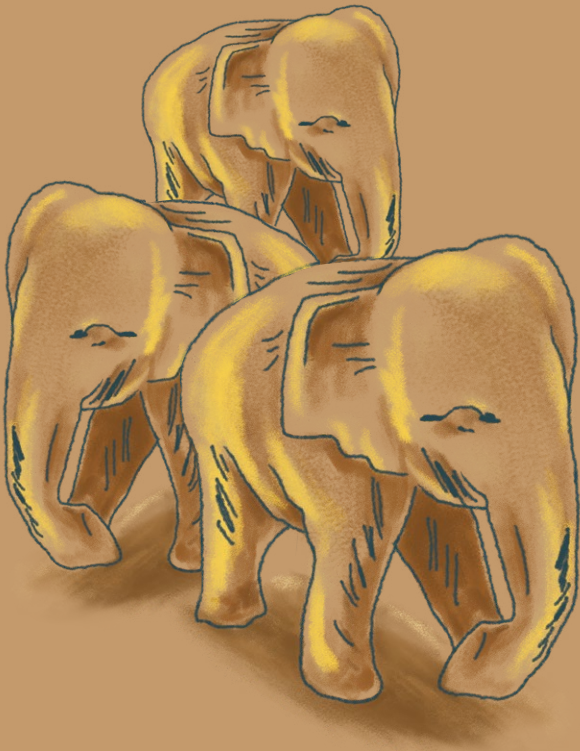
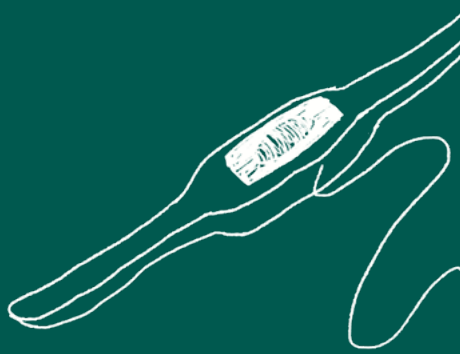


ASEAN HERITAGE TRAIL

# Legendary Golden TEAK WOOD





# Legendary Golden TEAK WOOD

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Museums and Elephants Sanctuaries

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Living Arts Highlights



# Legendary Golden Teak Wood

**Teak wood brought prosperity mainly to Myanmar, Northern Thailand and Laos. Today, magnificent mansions and temples as well as preserved forests testify of this wealth.**

Since the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, teak wood has been considered as one of the most precious items for trading in Southeast Asia. Teak wood trading is a fascinating story similar to a novel that explains also the historical and cultural evolution of a vast region covering in Southeast Asia Burma (Myanmar today), Lanna principalities (today Northern Thailand) and a bit of Laos. All the ingredients are there for a great novel: wars, fear of foreign powers and fights to consolidate business, negotiations, powerful noble people and traders. Teak wood created a unique cultural and heritage legacy for the entire northwest part of the current ASEAN.

Teak is recognised as a most valuable premium wood due to its texture, colour and durability. The wood has effectively a colour varying between the gold and a reddish brown, a delicate pattern and above all an extreme resilience. Many experts consider teak wood as one of the most extraordinary wood in the world. Teak is only indigenous to four countries which are India and in Southeast Asia in Laos, Myanmar and Thailand. Teak wood forests are then unique to ASEAN.

The world has indeed a long love story with teak wood. Teak has been a very appreciated good for trade since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Its resilience quality made it the perfect wood to build ships, especially the vessels of trading companies from Europe. There are historical tracks over Arab traders along Tanintharyi coast in the south of Myanmar who built ships made of teak wood and set up the first warehouses for repairing vessels.

Rapidly, Myanmar established itself as the trade centre for teak wood in the region, particularly after Great Britain's victory over Burma in the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852. The newly created Lower Burma- part of British India- brought economic stability helping to establish a flourishing teak trade in the region.

Northern Thailand with its vast teak wood forests played a specific role as teak trade expanded into Northern Siam where merchants had only to get permission from local rulers.

In the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lanna various kingdoms and principalities as vassal states to Siam were sending every year tributes in the form of teak wood to Bangkok. But local princes were also trading with neighbouring Burmese merchants especially as trade was concentrated in the hands of Shan and Karen people, ethnics present in both Burma and Northern Thailand.

To limit however chaotic —and sometimes lawless- trading, teak deforestation as well as to assert a better control over foreign companies looking for business, King Rama V the Great established in 1897 the Royal Forest. It helped to centralized all the teak business formalities in Siam, provided concessions and collected of course revenues for the State.

Over the years, concessions were given to half a dozen foreign companies, mostly from Britain. Among the most famous were the Borneo Company Limited, the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation but also Det Østasiatiske Kompagni (East Asiatic Company), Louis T. Leonowens Limited and the Siam Forest Company. There was also Kim Seng Lee, a Chinese company receiving a concession. In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, companies became also involved in the development of infrastructures such as canals or rail.

Teak was skidded by elephants, as those animals were (and still are) deemed to carry the logs due to their rounded shape and their capacity to access areas difficult for vehicles. As an example, despite mechanization, half of the teak logged in Myanmar is still done by elephants. Many can be visited in sanctuaries or camps which are acknowledged to treat animals with respect and care.

In the three countries, rivers were used for teak transportation. In Northern Thailand, logs were sent on the Ping, Wang, Yom and Nan Rivers before reaching the Chao Phraya River in Bangkok. In Laos, the Mekong River used to carry logs up to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) during colonial times while in Myanmar, teak was transported essentially along the Irrawaddy River to Yangon. The floating season mostly lasted from May to February.

Teak wood industry's development brought prosperity to local noblemen and merchants and this is the legacy left today all around the region. Many cities managed to preserve teak wood houses and temples, some of the most remarkable teak heritage cities being Phrae, Lampang and Chiang Mai in Thailand, Bago in Myanmar. Visitors can there discover exquisite houses and religious shrines with delicate sculptures, bas reliefs as well as exquisite handicraft. Other areas are now national parks or preserve elephants, often formerly used in logging. Teak wood is definitely deeply rooted in the culture of Northwest ASEAN. This trail has then be created to pay respect to one of the most fabled woods in the world and also to remind tourists about the fragility of nature and today fight to preserve not only its resources but also its heritage.




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## FACTS ABOUT TEAK WOOD

In 2010, experts recorded some 22.2 million hectares (ha) of natural teak forests in the three Southeast Asian countries mentioned above. Myanmar represented 60% of all teak forests in the region with 13.5 million ha followed by Thailand with 8.7 million ha. Laos represents only a tiny portion with 15,000 ha as teak wood forests are mainly an extension of existing forests in Thailand.

For decades, teak wood forests were depleted to satisfy demand but things have changed in recent years. Natural teak forests are now protected while the plantation of teak forests is expanding.

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# Legendary Golden Teak Wood

## Thailand

Tak  
Uttaradit  
Nan

Lampang  
Phrae  
Phayao

Chiang Mai

## Myanmar

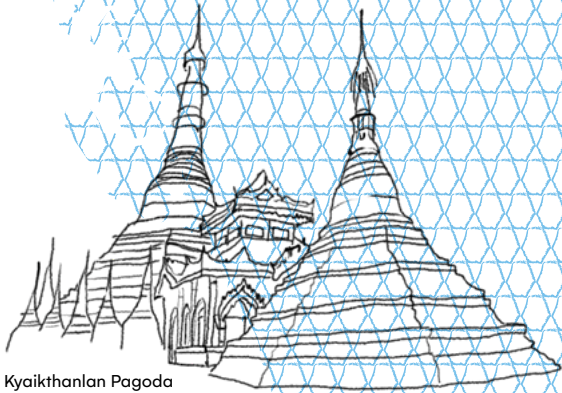
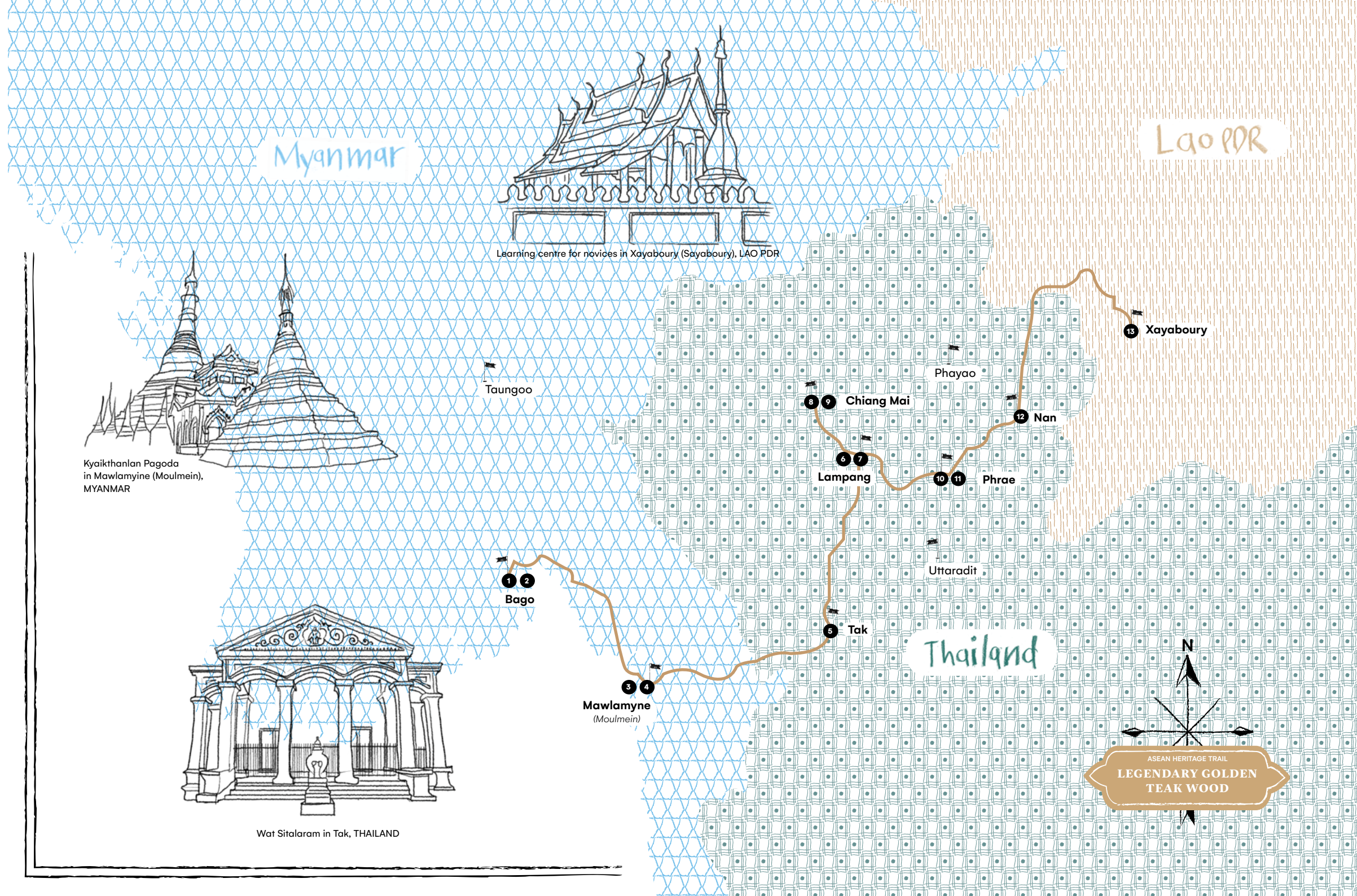
Bago

Taungoo

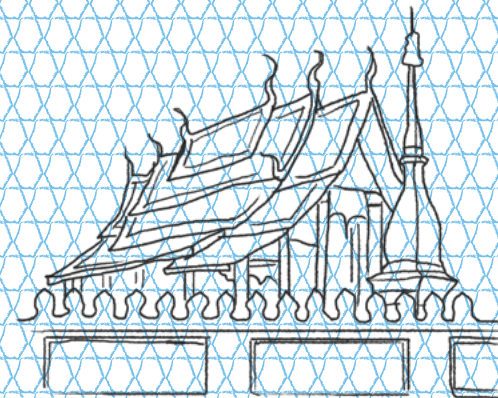
Mawlamyne  
(Moulmein)

## Lao PDR

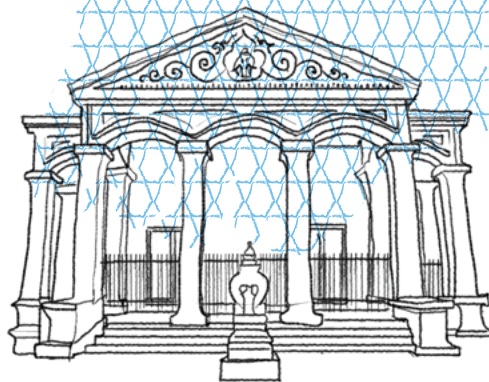
Xayaboury



Kyaikthanlan Pagoda in Mawlamyne (Moulmein), MYANMAR



Learning centre for novices in Xayaboury (Sayaboury), LAO PDR



Wat Sitalaram in Tak, THAILAND



ASEAN HERITAGE TRAIL  
**LEGENDARY GOLDEN  
TEAK WOOD**





## Attractions not to be Missed



### 1 Kyaik Pun Pagoda, Bago

Bago, MYANMAR

Located 4.5 km away from Bago city, the 1476-built Kyaik Pun Pagoda is probably one of the most interesting to discover due to the presence of four 27 meter-high towering images of Buddha. They are standing next to the yinbyin — a platform surrounding a pagoda where people generally pray and represent the four Buddhas who reached Nirvana.

### 2 Kyaiktiyo Pagoda, Mon State

Mon State, MYANMAR

Some 80 km from Bago, this pagoda is a must-see for any traveller. Like a miracle, a tiny pagoda tops a granite boulder covered with gold leaves regularly changed by male devotees. Another miracle is that the rock crowned by the pagoda seems to defy gravity laws as it looks that it would roll down the hill at any time. Legends tell that the pagoda contains a hair from Lord Buddha, which prevents the rock of falling down...

Kyaikthanlan  
Pagoda in  
Mawlamyine  
(Moulmein)



Mawlamyine  
First Baptist  
Church



### 3 Kyaikthanlan Pagoda in Mawlamyine (Moulmein) Mawlamyine, MYANMAR

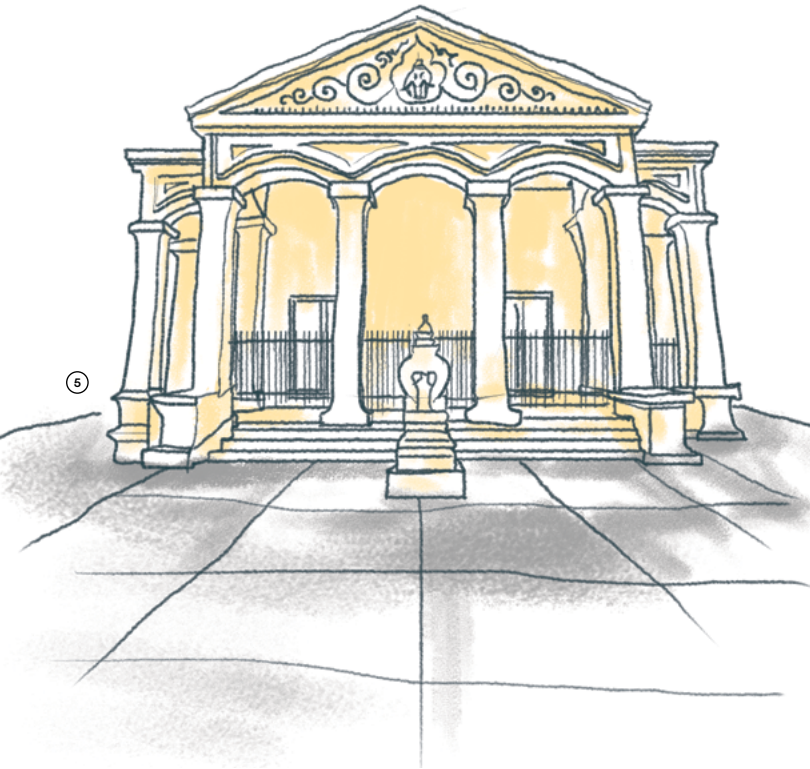
is the most famous and the highest pagoda in town, dominating the city from its 46 m height. The pagoda was built in 875 but totally restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the pagoda, there is a fabulous view over Mawlamyine but also over nearby islands and the limestone mountains of Kayin State. The pagoda is famous thanks to British writer Rudyard Kipling as it is mentioned in his poetry book “The Road to Mandalay”.

### 4 Mawlamyine First Baptist Church

Mawlamyine, MYANMAR

was constructed in 1827 by American Missionary Adoniram Judson, a famed American missionary. While the exterior of the church takes its inspiration from English-influenced, Gothic Revival design, the exceptional use of teak wood in the construction of its inside structure as well as furniture show the crafts expertise of local Mon people. In town, look at the crumbling colonial-era structures left by British which once gave to Mawlamyine its nickname of “Little London”.

## Wat Sitalaram



### 5 Wat Sitalaram and Trok Ban Chin

Tak, THAILAND

In Tak old town, Wat Sitalaram offers a unique structure for its European style ordination hall. Near to the temple is Trok Ban Chin, a small alley where rare Siamese heritage wooden houses —most in teak wood— line up along the road and give a nostalgic Old-Siam atmosphere to the entire street. The former Governor Residence is now Tak Museum.



### 6 Kad Kong Ta Walking Street

Lampang, THAILAND

Although the old market street has turned over years into a must-see in Lampang city, it still retains its laid-back atmosphere with its numerous wooden houses blending Burmese, Thai and European styles with intricate wood carvings. They testify of Lampang teak-wood related prosperity which attracted a high number of Burmese, Chinese and European merchants. On weekends, the street is turning pedestrian with a lively night market.



### 7 Wat Si Rong Mueang, Lampang

Lampang, THAILAND

The temple is a typical Burmese style structure all made of teak wood and built by Burmese immigrants working in the teak wood logging 100 years ago. The temple shows an interesting mix of Shan and Lanna styles with intricate carvings on wooden panels.





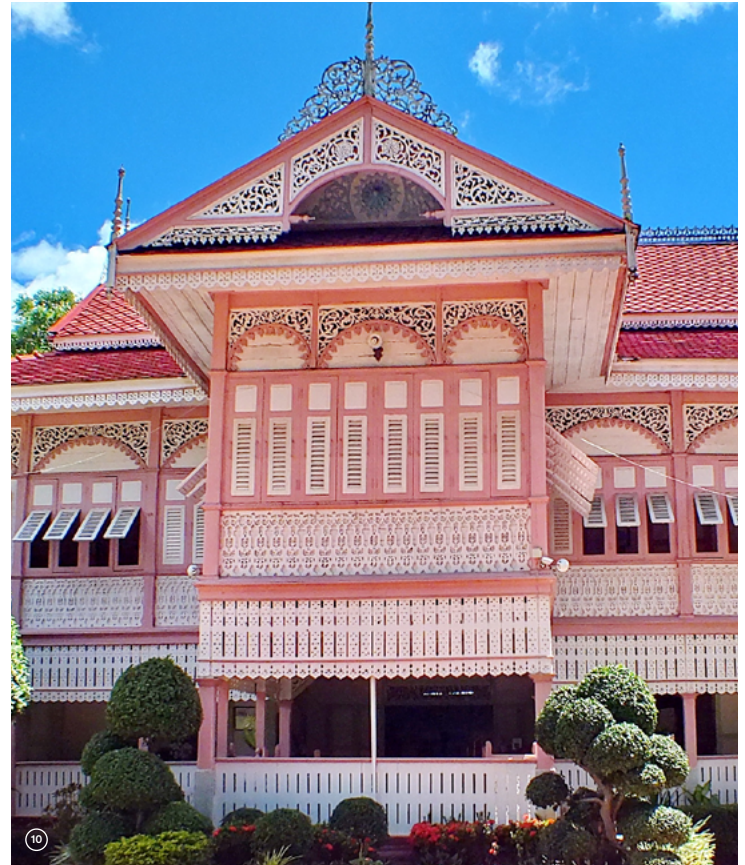
Paying homage to  
Queen Victoria  
Chiang Mai

**8 Charoenrat Road British settlement, Chiang Mai** *Chiang Mai, THAILAND*

Located on the East bank of the Ping River line along this road beautiful teak and timber wood houses, which are occupied by design shops, cafes, restaurants and boutique hotels. It was where British mostly settled as teak wood companies such as the Borneo Company Ltd had their Siam headquarters. The latter is now a luxury hotel (137 Pillars House), which includes a small museum. Wat Katekaram integrates also a small museum with objects about the history of logging in Chiang Mai.

**9 Paying homage to Queen Victoria, Chiang Mai** *Chiang Mai, THAILAND*

Like in London or Sydney, there is a statue of Queen Victoria in Chiang Mai like in London, Hong Kong or Sydney! Located in Chiang Mai Foreign cemetery, the statue was first erected to commemorate "Her loyal subjects of every race," following her death in 1901. The statue arrived by elephants and porters from Rangoon in Chiang Mai in 1903 just on time for Christmas. Originally standing on the banks of the Mae Ping River at the British Consulate, the statue ended up in the cemetery in 1978 after the Consulate closed down.



**10 Phrae, ASEAN capital of teak wood mansions.** *Phrae, THAILAND*

A small town surrounded by virgin teak wood forests, Phrae became the 'capital city' in Siam of the teak wood trade. In 1864, the East Borneo Company arrived followed by the Bombay Burmah Trading Company and finally in 1897 the Danish-owned East Asiatic Company also obtained large land concessions and settled in Phrae. Prosperity linked to logging lasted for 50 years with local landlords benefiting from the money generated from teak wood concessions. The town saw then the construction of magnificent mansions and villas — mostly teak. At least two dozen villas still stand today representing one of Southeast Asia's best preserved and most prolific architectural heritage in teak.

### 11 All about teak at Phrae Forestry School

Phrae, THAILAND

Pracharath Forest Protection Institute under the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation is located on former concessions owned by the East Asiatic Company and the East Borneo Company. Small wooden bungalows are still there and surrounded by botanical gardens, some teak wood plantations as well as a small museum documenting the history of the teak trade showing rare pieces of wood.

### 12 Admire Thailand equivalent of "Mona Lisa" in Nan

Nan, THAILAND

Wat Phumin temple is a charming Lanna style temple dating back to 1606. Its Ordination Hall is covered by exceptional frescoes, which however were created during the renovation of the temple in 1867 in Tai Lue style. Thailand most famous painting is there: the "whispering", showing a man talking to the ear of a woman. As famed here than Mona Lisa in France!



Admire Thailand equivalent of "Mona Lisa" in Nan



Phrae City Museum  
(Khum Chao Luang  
Mueang Phrae)

Wat  
Sisavangvong



### 13 Learning centre for novices in Xayaboury (Sayaboury).

Xayaboury, LAO PDR

One of three Lao temples regarded of the highest rank, Wat Sisavangvong in the middle of Xayaboury town welcomes novices dedicated to study, meditate and be ordained for the monkhood. Only some 100 will be chosen for the honour. Local legend tells that if someone wants to be a monk, he must first ask a statue of Naga inside the temple and make merit by presenting it with gold.



## Museums and Elephants Sanctuaries

Many local museums show in particular local way of life as well as the history of the region. Interesting for travellers looking to gain knowledge about communities.



Kanbawzathadi Palace in Bago

### MYANMAR

**Kanbawzathadi Palace in Bago.** The original palace was built in 1556, consisted of 76 apartments and halls. It was burned down in 1599. It was reconstructed like the original in 1990 and finished in 1992. While the room and the exterior architecture looks are very faithful to the original, original furniture and royal items have been lost and replaced with replicas. However, they still give a fine idea of the way Kings in Bago used to live. The palace is home to the Nandawya Research Museum, which exhibits items and artifacts found during the excavations. Visitors can admire 400 years-old teak pillars, potteries, coins, weapons as well as a collection of 16<sup>th</sup> century Buddha images.

**Mon State Cultural Museum, Mawlamyine.** It displays musical instruments, bronzeware, silverware, coins and figurines of Mon people, the highlight being Buddha images and 100-year-old wooden sculptures.

Museums and  
Elephants Sanctuaries

Gastronomy Delights

All About Craft,  
Design and Textile

Living Arts Highlights

## THAILAND

**Tak History Museum** is located in the former Provincial Governor's residence. The beautiful mansion served as the residence for HM the King and Queen while they visit Tak province in 1958. The museum collects and exhibits antiques, artifacts and many of Tak historical assets. The upper floor is dedicated to H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great.

**Dhanabadee Ceramic Museum, Lampang.** The museum was opened in 2012 on the initiative of a local businessman who started to manufacture chicken bowl as well as small dishes and cups for sauces and drinks back to 1957. They were all made from local clay. The museum tracks back the history of the firm and of ceramics manufacturing in Lampang, presents artists producing the popular chicken motive as well as contemporary ceramic art pieces.

**Wat Chedi Sao Lang, Lampang** is 2 km away from town and is set amid rice fields. The name literally means "The Temple of Twenty chedis" (pagoda), easily to understand why when looking at its 20 stupas! In the back chapel is a small museum showing rare pieces of Lanna art, mostly donated by locals. The most precious exhibit is a 150-year old Buddha image in pure gold.

**Dara Phirom Palace Museum, Chiang Mai.** Located north of town along highway 107 in Mae Rim district, the museum is an architectural treasure. The mansion was home to Princess Dara Rasami and was built entirely in golden teak wood. Inside, it shows lavishly decorated rooms in early 20<sup>th</sup> century style with many art nouveau motives. Princess Dara Rasami was known for supporting Buddhism and promoting cultural practices in Chiang Mai. The gardens were recently renovated.

**Khum Chao Burirat House, Chiang Mai.** In the heart of Chiang Mai historical town, the beautiful teak wood house in typical Lanna style is now the Lanna Architectural Centre with a small exhibition showing the influence of western and Lanna style on local houses with some models. A peaceful place to walk with its gardens.

**MAIIAM Contemporary Art Museum, Chiang Mai.** Belonging to the wealthy Bunnag family, the museum shows the outstanding private collection built during 30 years by Patsri Bunnag, her husband Jean Michel Beurdeley and their son Eric Bunnag Booth. The minimalist-style museum's premises welcome the permanent collection, temporary exhibition as well as a shop and restaurant.

**Phrae City Museum (Khum Chao Luang Mueang Phrae).** Standing in the heart of Phrae city, the magnificent teak wood mansion with its wood carving used to be the house of Phrae Governor. All the rooms have been restored showing how local noble men used to live.

**Ban Wongburi Museum, Phrae.** Another magnificent teak wood mansion inspired by Western architecture and built by Chinese craftsmen. The mansion belonged to local princess Chao Sunanta Wongburi and is still inhabited by her descendants. The museum shows furniture, silverware as well as information about this powerful local family.

**Rim Nan Art Gallery, Nan.** Located a few kilometres away from Nan city centre, the art gallery stands in a unique setting surrounded by woods. It has a spectacular collection of sculptures from local Nan artists as well as contemporary painting. An unusual place to discover...



Dara Phirom Palace Museum, Chiang Mai



## UNDERSTANDING ELEPHANTS

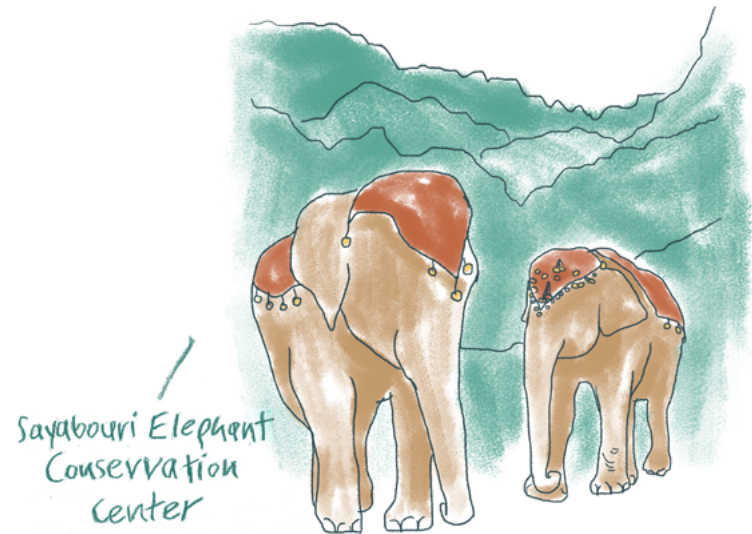
Looking at elephants in the region is a must do as the animals have been part of the logging industry due to their ability to access any area, including mountainous ones and also due to their natural strength. While they are still elephants today working in the teak wood and logging industry — particularly in Myanmar as logging is banned in Thailand —, conservation centres and sanctuaries have been created over the last 20 years to protect the animals. For travellers however, it can be sometimes hard to distinguish the real sanctuaries for elephants from entertainment camps where elephants perform shows as all claim to be for the protection of the species. Best is to check on the web what kind of programs are proposed to travellers. If animals are part of a circus-style show or do rides, then it is better to avoid to visit. Here are two elephants' conservation centres which have been recognized for their dedication to the species.



Elephant Nature Park, Chiang Mai.

**Elephant Nature Park, Chiang Mai.** Established in the 1990's, Elephant Nature Park is a natural sanctuary and rescue centre for dozens of elephants who used mostly to work as tourist attractions. The park is located some 60km from the city. The team at ENP park is also involved in tree planting in surroundings to ensure ecological balance of plants and animals. Some 25 acres of the mountainside will be planted every year for the first 5 years. The centre proposes various one day programs to walk, bath, eat, providing care or learning to socialize with elephants. There is also a two-day stay including one overnight.

[www.elephantnaturepark.org](http://www.elephantnaturepark.org)



**Sayabouri Elephant Conservation Center** is considered one of the best in ASEAN. Created in 2011 by a team of experts, its program is set up around the wellbeing of the animal, the reproduction, vet care, and the schooling of mahouts. Elephants have not been taken away from their natural environment but are elephants who used to work in the logging industry or in mass tourism attractions. The centre has about 29 elephant elephants living in 530 hectares of protected forest. Once breed and regrouped into their social circles, elephants are released into national parks and protected areas. They are possibilities to stay at the centre for a limited number of participants.

[www.elephantconservationcenter.com](http://www.elephantconservationcenter.com)

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### **LARGEST ELEPHANTS GATHERING IN ASEAN HOSTED IN SAYABOURI**

Laos has for a long time been named 'Kingdom of a thousand elephants' with the animal still considered a living symbolic icon. The Elephant Festival is celebrated every February in Xayaboury Province not only to demonstrate the traditional ties between Lao communities and elephants but also to draw attention over the endangered status of the species. The Festival includes a majestic elephant procession with up to 100 elephants, a traditional elephant Baci ceremony, fruit and flower offerings, monks' blessing, mahouts' and elephants' presentation as well as performances from Lao and foreign artists and an outdoor elephant museum. Rides on elephants are not recommended as animals should be treated with respect.

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## Gastronomy Delights

Natural flavours and simple dishes made from organic products characterize food in the region thanks to a rich fertile land. Fruits, vegetable — green beans or cabbage are often to be seen—, rice but also bamboo, pumpkin and soybeans are the basic staple of local people often accompanied by pork or chicken. Fragrance comes from the use of shallots, spring onions, garlic, lemongrass, coriander, turmeric, ginger, galangal and chillies among others. They are opportunities to try ethnic food such as Akha, Mon or Shan food in the three countries.



### ETHNIC MON AND TAI LUE DELICACIES

Traditional Mon food is based on accommodating curry and prepared by using boiling. Dishes are perfect for anyone on a diet as they are high in nutrient composition and low in carbohydrate and fat. Dishes are based on vegetables, fresh herbs and spices. Mawlamyine is the centre of Mon food with a high number of restaurants but it is possible to also find Mon food in villages around Chiang Mai where hill tribes are leaving. Baan Pha Mon village welcome tourists wishing to learn about the customs of Pga K'nyau people and get initiated to their local cuisine. Villagers teach how to cook Ber, a curry made of rice and blended with young rattan palm and minced pork or Pga K'nyau chilli paste which contains of course chillies and shallots but also... boiled crickets!

Also located in Chiang Mai province, try ethnic Tai Lue food at Ban Luang Nuea in Doi Saket District where villagers turn frogs into a chilli paste served with 'elephant ear' (a green vegetable) or field crabs living in rice fields which are simmered in herbs and chillies.



### ICONIC DISHES TO TRY ALONG THE GOLDEN TEAK WOOD TRAIL

#### MYANMAR

**Thingyan Wax Rice in Mawlamyine.** In Myanmar, the city is very famous for its culinary creativity. Thingyan Wax Rice is a traditional dish in Mon State but very hard to find in the rest of Myanmar. Wax-smoked water is poured on rice with ice added. The dish can be eaten with a mango salad side dish or fried Thingyan dish done from grated unripe mango and dried fish flavoured with turmeric and onion.

**Panthay Khauk-swe,** the noodles are topped with a chicken curry marinated with onions, tomatoes and turmeric. The dish takes its inspiration from Indian cuisine.

#### NORTHERN THAILAND

**Kaeng Om with beef, chicken or pork** is a specialty from Northern Thailand. The soup is served by boiling meat with curry paste and vegetables while shrimp paste is only used to enhance flavour.

**Lanna Khao Soi.** This simple dish is a favourite in Northern Thailand. Rice noodles are cooked in a heavy broth mixing turmeric with coconut milk to make the dish creamier. The noodle soup is typically accompanied with a small dish of diced red onion, coriander, scallion and pickled greens on the side.

**Kaeng Hung Ley** is another typical Lanna dish, often offered to monks during religious holidays as it is considered auspicious. It is also considered an auspicious dish. Kaeng Hung Ley mixes pork belly strips with ginger, tamarind paste, pickled garlic cloves, chillies, galangal, lemongrass, shrimp paste and roasted peanuts. The blend gives a sweet, salty and slightly spicy flavour.

**Kanom Jeen Nam Ngiao** is also a specialty from the North. It is typically served with raw bean sprouts, pickled greens, lime, fried dried chillies, pork rind and topped with fried garlic, scallion and shredded coriander, all enhanced by the use of pollen or red cotton flower.

#### LAO PDR

**Green Papaya Salad.** Called in Laotian Tam Mak Hoong, the green papaya salad distinguished itself from Thailand's own papaya salad by its saltier taste due to the use of fermented fish sauce. While Thai will add peanuts to the dish, Laotian will add to their own papaya salad raw eggplant. Other ingredients include palm sugar, lime, garlic, tomatoes, dried shrimp, chillies are pounded together in a traditional mortar and pestle.

**Lao sausages** are made of pork with the meat being infused into a mix of lemongrass, galangal, kaffir leaves, shallots, coriander, chillies, and fish sauce. This gives a unique taste to the sausage which is generally eaten with sticky rice.

## All About Craft, Design and Textile

Lanna and Upper Lao cultures in Northern Thailand and Laos, Myanmar Mon and Shan cultures in the areas bordering Thailand are rich in traditions that translates in exquisite textiles, silverware and jewels as well as ceramics and teak wood objects. Chiang Mai is even turning these days into one of the top design cities in Southeast Asia with a bunch of young local talents giving a fresh look at traditional Lanna crafts.



Chiang Mai Celadon

**Chiang Mai young designers.** Looking for an original piece from fashion to handicraft? Try local fashion designers? Try **The Localist**, a minimalist shop which gathers objects created by Chiang Mai's young designers with a choice of textiles, clothes, pottery or wooden craft. The Localist regularly organizes also workshops. **Nussara** in Wat Ket sub-district is behind the recent revival of Mae Chaem District's weavers with the increasingly popular sell of sinh teen jok (round skirt) in colourful and funky designs. Beautiful paper creation can be admired (and bought) at KRADAS Café which is dedicated to paper crafts. This shop won the Chiang Mai Design Awards (CDA) for Retail Design category in 2016.

**Chiang Mai Celadon.** The green or sometimes yellow or blue ceramics are manufactured in Thailand for over 700 years. Celadon is one kind of three main types of ceramics in Thailand. Its production is today continued at "Baan Celadon", a workshop and shop which shows visitors the way craftsmen work celadon. While very classical in its layout, pieces coming from Baan Celadon are part of Chiang Mai and Lanna traditions.



**Ceramics in Lampang.** A long tradition in town, ceramics craft has turned increasingly popular thanks to the production of the famed chicken bowl since 1957. Roasters are on every ceramic these days in Lampang — as it is the symbol of the town with many craft shops now giving the figure a more contemporary twist.

**'Sinh' from Nan.** The province of Nan is proud of its sinhs. Nothing to do with the English meaning as Sinh are clothes made of cotton and eventually silk. "Pha Sinh Man" or "Sinh man" is a kind of cloth for use in daily life, generally dyed in a blue colour with pink and white stripes. Sinh Chiang Saen is a plain cotton piece generally in red, violet, or green. More elegant is "Sinh pong" which mixes silk and cotton with added gold and silver lame while Sinh Kham Kerb was restricted only to the high class and rulers with a sophisticated design enhanced by gold and silver lamé woven. Shops around Nan and villages sell Sinh, generally in cotton.

**Ogre Island across Mawlamyine city** is well known for its handicraft. It is possible to visit workshops making teak and timber musical instruments, traditional Mon textiles and bamboo items such as hats.

**Sayaboury province in Laos,** Hongsa and Ngeun districts are the heart of **Laos cotton industry.** Cotton is produced in Ban Bi Mi village in Ngeun and Hongsa's Ban Vieng Keo with visitors able to watch the entire process from cotton cultivation to woven goods. Skilled locals weave and sell cotton-embroidered fabrics that can be used for shoulder bags, traditional sinh skirts, table cloths or curtains. Each December, cotton-weaving villages hold a Spinning Ritual, during which local women sit and spin cotton around an evening fire.



'Sinh' from Nan



## Living Arts Highlights

**Mon traditional dances** can be seen in Myanmar but also some areas of Thailand with Mon communities. The traditional performance consists of eight traditional shows: welcome dance, kid's dance, water festival dance, candle light dance, flirting dance, two males and two females culture dance, solo female culture dance and farewell dance.

**Thingyan Festival, Myanmar** is the water festival celebrating Burmese New Year. On the eve of Thingyan, the first day of the festival is called a–kyo nei with religious activities with parties closing the ceremonial day at night. The next day called a–kya nei is Thingyan high point where people traditionally sprinkle scented water from a silver bowl on others. The day is accompanied by puppets performances, traditional dances and musical performances. In ancient times, Burmese kings had a hair–washing ceremony with clear pristine water from Shampoo Island near Mawlamyine.

**Yee Peng Festival in Chiang Mai** is a spectacular event where hundreds of rice paper lanterns are light up and rise to illuminate Chiang Mai nightly skies. Yee Peng Festival generally precedes Thailand candles festival of Loi Krathong. During Yee Peng, locals hang colourful lanterns at homes and public places. The festival includes also traditional Thai dance shows. To get the most spectacular pictures of people releasing the lanterns, go to the official 'Yee Peng Parade' generally hosted at Maejo University (tickets on sale on the web).

**Loi Krathong, Northern Thailand.** The festival which is celebrated all across Thailand in November is probably more traditional in this part of the Kingdom with people dressing in traditional outfits and letting candles floating on the rivers.

**Tan Kuai Salak Festival in Nan.** Organised all across Northern Thailand, the festival is a major merit making ceremony for Buddhist people. It is in Nan accompanied by a traditional boat race. Boats are made from large log and with a sculpted prow in the shape of a Naga. The festival and race are hosted between mid–October and early November.

Loi Krathong,  
Northern Thailand



**Boun Kong Khao Yai Festival, Xayabouri.** This Festival is organized every year at the end of January in Somsavanh village, Phiang district about 37 km south of Xayabouri town. The festival includes many activities such as a market fair, rice procession, elephant procession, drum beating contest, singing contests, traditional performance to celebrate the rice harvest in this region, renowned for the importance of its farmlands.



Yee Peng Festival in Chiang Mai

### **SPIRITS AND GHOSTS CELEBRATION IN XAYABOURI, LAO PDR.**

Xayabouri is home to many centuries–old beliefs with spirits and ghosts being part of daily life.

**Xayabouri Phi Tha Khon Festival** — the Laotian pendant to the famed Phi Tha Khon festival in Loei, Thailand– is hosted in Paklay during three days between March and April. The first day is the Ghost Festival itself where local residents invite protection from the Phi Ta Khon, the local spirits. Parades are held with locals wearing masks made of rice husks or coconut leaves with hats made from rice steamers. Bells and drums add to the joyful atmosphere. The second day is generally dedicated to costume and dance contests as well as to a Rocket Festival.

**Boun Phavet in Wat Sibounhuang** is also dedicated to forest spirits living on the hill where the temple is located. Wat Sibounhuang is Xayabouri oldest temple as it was built in 1456. It houses a 7–meter–long reclining golden Buddha, the province's largest. The festival is held somewhere in the middle of March with a procession held in remembrance of Phavet. The procession of the forest spirits starts at the cemetery and ends with the burning of clothes which are then thrown in the river.



# Information

Going along the Teak Wood Heritage Trail is easier than ever as connectivity is improving with Myanmar while many border checkpoints exist between Thailand and Lao PDR.

## Visa

While Thailand provides free visa on arrivals to most countries around the world, a tourist e-visa is necessary for most travellers visiting Myanmar while e-visa or visa on arrivals at borders are proposed to Lao PDR. Regulation should however be checked before departure at local embassies or consulates.

## Flying

From both Bangkok Don Mueang and Suvarnabhumi airports, there are direct flights to Chiang Mai, Lampang, Nan and Phrae as well as to Yangon in Myanmar and Luang Prabang in Lao PDR. Flights to Chiang Mai are also available from Hat Yai, Phuket, Ubon Ratchathani as well as from Luang Prabang and Yangon. Moulmein in Myanmar is linked to Yangon.

## Other transportation

There are boats along the Mekong River for visitors from Nan wishing to reach Luang Prabang —via Pakbeng.

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## NORTHERN THAILAND

[www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org)

[www.chiangmai.go.th](http://www.chiangmai.go.th)  
[www.museumthailand.com](http://www.museumthailand.com)

## MYANMAR

[Myanmar.travel](http://Myanmar.travel)

## INDONESIA

[www.tourismlaos.org](http://www.tourismlaos.org)  
[www.tourismsayaboury.org](http://www.tourismsayaboury.org)



**Legendary Golden  
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Online version

ASEAN HERITAGE TRAIL

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