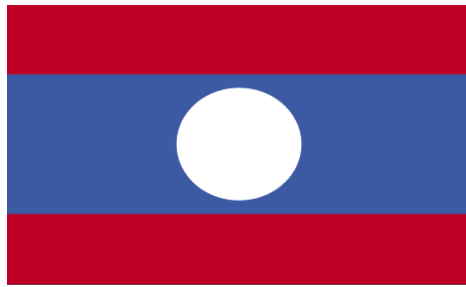




# LAOS



## INTRODUCTION

Modern-day Laos has its roots in the ancient Lao kingdom of Lan Xang. Laos came under the domination of Siam (Thailand) from the late 18th century until the late 19th century, when it became part of French Indochina. In 1975, the communist Pathet Lao took control of the government. A gradual, limited return to private enterprise and the liberalization of foreign investment laws began in 1988.

## GOVERNMENT

### Chief of State

President THONGLOUN Sisoulith

### Head of Government

Prime Minister SONXAI Siphandon

### Government Type

communist state

### Capital

Vientiane (Viangchan)

### Legislature

unicameral National Assembly or Sapha Heng Xat (164 seats)

### Ambassador to US

Ambassador Sisavath INPHACHANH

### US Ambassador

Ambassador Peter M. HAYMOND

## GEOGRAPHY

### Area

Total: 236,800 sq km

Land: 230,800 sq km

Water: 6,000 sq km

### Climate

tropical monsoon; rainy season (May to November); dry season (December to April)

### Natural Resources

timber, hydropower, gypsum, tin, gold, gemstones

## ECONOMY

### Economic Overview

lower middle-income, industrial Southeast Asian economy; high inflation due to 2022 currency depreciation brought on by persistently high debt; new Laos-China railway and dry port; rising inequities; ongoing labor shortages

**GDP (Purchasing Power Parity)** \$58.26 billion (2021 est.)

**GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity)** \$7,800 (2021 est.)

**Industries** - mining (copper, tin, gold, gypsum); timber, electric power, agricultural processing, rubber, construction, garments, cement, tourism

**Agricultural products** - rice, roots/tubers, cassava, sugar cane, vegetables, bananas, maize, watermelons, coffee, taro

**Exports** \$7.82 billion (2021 est.)

electricity, gold, paper, copper, rubber, flavored water (2021)

**partners:** Thailand 33%, China 27%, Vietnam 13%, Australia 8%, Switzerland 3% (2021)

**Imports** \$6.53 billion (2021 est.)

refined petroleum, gold, cars, broadcasting equipment, delivery trucks, tractors (2021)

**partners:** Thailand 53%, China 26%, Vietnam 10% (2021)

## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

### Population

7.85 million (2023 est.)

### Population Growth

1.3% (2023 est.)

### Ethnicity

Lao 53.2%, Khmou 11%, Hmong 9.2%, Phouthay 3.4%, Tai 3.1%, Makong 2.5%, Katong 2.2%, Lue 2%, Akha 1.8%, other 11.6% (2015 est.)

### Language

Lao (official), French, English, various ethnic languages

### Religion

Buddhist 64.7%, Christian 1.7%, none 31.4%, other/not stated 2.1% (2015 est.)

### Urbanization

urban population: 38.2% of total population (2023)

rate of urbanization: 2.99% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)