

# **THAILAND**

## **Ubon Province**



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Travel  
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**Plus  
Pa Taem  
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## Ubon Province



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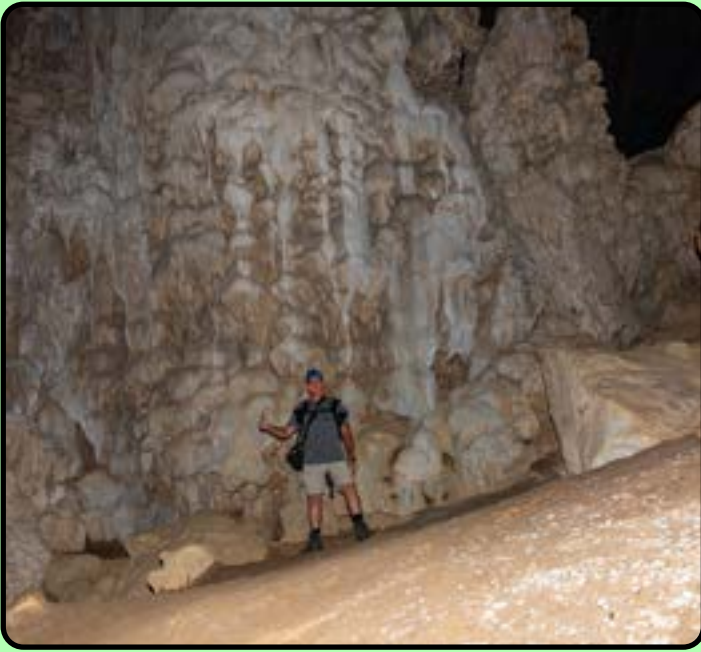
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**12GO ASIA**

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# FOREWORD



Thanks for downloading this FREE interactive travel guide. You've made an excellent choice if you plan on **GETTING OFF THE BEATEN TRACK** in THAILAND. Before you delve into the content of this travel guide, please take a few minutes to read this foreword. It outlines how to make the best use of the information contained within.

**First-hand experience:** This travel guide has been put together using first-hand experience gained from traveling to, and exploring, all the locations presented within. The information and photos featured in my travel guides, have been collated over years of putting boots on the ground. There is no second-hand information, or information which is plagiarized from other travel sources, within this guide. Every cave, waterfall, river, viewpoint, jungle trail, temple site, guesthouse and restaurant presented, or promoted, I have been to and seen and/or experienced myself.

**Getting off the beaten track:** The primary focus of my travel guides is **ADVENTURE TRAVEL** (and activities) to locations which are non-mainstream tourist destinations. As an example, there is no information for the mainstream tourist locations of Thailand (except as transit hub's before heading off to a more remote location) listed in this travel guide. As such, the information in this guide is directed towards travelers (not

tourists) who are keen for a bit of adventure - caving, climbing, jungle trekking, kayaking - in an off the beaten track location, of South East Asia. If these types of activities aren't to your liking, then this travel guide won't be much use to you. There's no information in here about the party towns in South East Asia.

**Budget travel:** Knowing the importance of making the most of your hard-earned currency, my travel links (**12GO ASIA**) and accommodation links (**AGODA**) are predominantly budget oriented. They provide a range of options for getting to a central hub, or base, from which you can make your daily explorations.

**Independent sightseeing:** Instead of going on group tours, I strongly promote the idea of renting your own vehicle (car or motorbike) and venturing out yourself. To help you get to the exact location, there's always a **GOOGLE MAPS** link to show the route from a hub (hotel or guesthouse) to the sightseeing attraction. If there's a local tour operator offering excellent adventure type tours, or activities, I'll provide links to their website. A good example of a great adventure tour operator is **GREEN DISCOVERY LAOS**, who offer excellent caving, kayaking and trekking tours throughout Laos.

**The Table of Contents:** This is page four of the travel guide and has a sequential list of sections, which you can go to directly by clicking on the **GREEN** numbered tab.

**YouTube Links:** These take you directly to my YouTube Vlog (**Megaworld Asia**) where you can see short, high quality travel videos of the numerous attractions listed in my travel guides. If you enjoy the videos, please hit the like button and don't forget to subscribe to see my upcoming adventures.

**Your next adventure is  
just one click away**

**Safe travels,**

**MEGA**

# Ubon Ratchathani Province

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**It's Time To Get  
Off The Beaten Track**

# How To Use This Interactive Travel Guide:

**The Table Of Contents:** To effortlessly move from the **TOC** to the page you want to view, simply click on the **page number**: **1**

**YouTube Links:** These will take you to a short highlights video, of the sightseeing attraction, in the section you're looking at:



**Other Links:** These take you to ancillary services such as recommended restaurants, or car and motorbike rental agencies, in the location you're traveling to:

## ANCILLARY SERVICES

**Travel Links:** This takes you to **12GO ASIA**, an excellent travel group which provides a range of options for getting around the region:



**The Table Of Contents:** To move back to the **TOC**, click on the **yellow arrows**, at the bottom of each Page: 

**Google Maps Links:** These provide a route from a designated location (e.g., a hotel) to a particular sightseeing attraction:



**Information Links:** These links take you to information sites, such as Wikipedia or Wiki-voyage, to provide more in-depth info on a particular subject or location:



**Accommodation Links:** This takes you to the Agoda website to check accommodation availability and make bookings:



**It's Time To Get Off The Beaten Track**



## UBON RATCHATHANI PROVINCE - GENERAL INFO

**About:** Ubon Ratchathani is the most eastern province of Thailand. It's situated in a region known as Isan, and shares borders with Laos and Cambodia. There are a number of excellent sightseeing attractions in the province but the two most significant locations are PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK (to the east) and PHU CHONG NA YOI (to the south). Both locations have excellent wilderness areas with hiking trails, picturesque waterfalls and scenic viewpoints.

**Getting to Ubon Ratchathani:** To visit both the above-mentioned locations, you'll first need to make your way to Ubon Ratchathani City (the provincial capital). If you're traveling from BANGKOK, there's a number of travel options available.

**Air travel:** The Thai domestic carrier, NOK AIR, has daily flights to from Don Mueang Airport (Bangkok) to Ubon Ratchathani.

**Train Travel:** The North-East train line ends at Ubon Ratchathani (departure from Hualamphong Station, Bangkok).

**Bus travel:** There is also a bus service

from Bangkok to Ubon Ratchathani which departs daily from Mo Chit bus station.

Click the link below to check your best option for getting to Ubon Ratchathani:



**Budget Accommodation:** An excellent choice for budget accommodation in Ubon Ratchathani is the FUNDEE MANSION. Click the link below for booking inquiries:



Click the link below for directions from the Ubon Bus Station to Fundee Mansion:



**A Scenic Location in Ubon Province**

## UBON RATCHATHANI PROVINCE - GENERAL INFO

**Mid-range Accommodation:** For over-nighting in Ubon Ratchathani, an excellent choice of mid-range accommodation is the **ARISTA HOTEL**. [Click the link below for booking inquiries:](#)



**Transportation Options:** The best way of visiting any of the recommended sightseeing areas is with your own vehicle, particularly if you plan to visit Phu Chong Na Yoi before heading to Pha Taem National Park. Having your own transportation will give you the freedom and mobility to visit all locations on your own schedule.

**Car Rentals:** The best option is to rent a vehicle in Ubon Ratchathani and do a loop, which takes in both National Parks. If you fly into Ubon Airport, there's a good choice car rental agencies on-site. [Click the following link to check car rental options in Ubon:](#)

### UBON RENTAL CARS

**Mini Bus Option:** Alternatively, if hiring a vehicle is out of your budget, you can catch a mini-bus from Ubon to Khong Chiam. The mini-bus departure point is the bus terminal in Ubon Ratchathani. The minibuses depart hourly from 06:00 to 18:00. [Click the link below for the location of the Ubon Bus Terminal:](#)



**Note:** There's no public transportation available from Ubon Ratchathani to Phu Chong Na Yoi, so renting a vehicle in Ubon is the best option for getting there.

**Doing a Loop:** To visit all areas the best approach is to do a loop, starting in Ubon Ratchathani, which first takes you down to Phu Chong Na Yoi, then across to Pha Taem National Park, and back across to Ubon.



## HUAY LUANG FALLS - GENERAL INFO

**About:** Huay Luang Waterfall is situated in PHU CHONG YA NOI NATIONAL PARK, in the south of Ubon Province, and along border of Cambodia and Laos. It's a medium sized waterfall, and when in full flow (June - October) it's an impressive sight.

**Getting There:** If you plan to visit the falls before heading over to Pha Taem National Park the best option is to depart Ubon in the morning. If you arrive in Ubon late in the day, overnighting there before driving down to Huay Luang Falls is advisable. You can visit the falls and make it to Khong Chi-am in daylight hours. Travel time from Ubon Ratchathani to Huay Luang Falls is approximately 2.25 hours. **Click the link below for directions from Ubon to Huay Luang Falls:**



**Onsite:** A sealed road takes you all the way to a carpark at the top of the falls. Surrounding the carpark are restaurant and restroom facilities. There's also a Park Administration Centre which you must pass

through, and pay an entry fee, to visit the waterfall.

**Entry Fee:** As with all National Parks in Thailand, there's an entry fee of **400 THB for foreigners.**

**Hours:** The opening hours for the National Park is 0700 - 1700.

**Sightseeing:** Once through the entry point a properly constructed walkway takes you down to an information point - above the waterfall lookout - which has a number of billboards, with maps and information about the sightseeing attractions in the area. From here, another stairway takes you directly to a lookout platform which provides excellent views across the falls.

**Nature Trail:** From the info billboards a cement path leads off to the right. This is a nature trail (1 km) which follows the river to a minor waterfall upriver; KANG KA LAO. The nature trail has points of interest along the way. **Click the link below for directions:**



**The viewpoint at the top of Huay Luang falls**

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## HUAY LUANG FALLS - SIGHTSEEING

**Stairway to the Base:** From the viewing platform there's a series of stairways to the base of Huay Luang Falls. The stairway, although a properly constructed trail (cement steps and handrails for safety), is quite steep in some sections; avoid slipping by maintaining three points of contact at all times, on the way down.

**Safety:** During the rainy season the steps are slippery with moisture and moss growth. So, take extra care when descending.

**At The Base:** As mentioned, during the rainy season there's a high volume of water spilling over the drop. However, there's no plunge pool of note for swimming. For some strange reason a park ranger was positioned nearby the falls to stop people from getting too close.

**Note:** As mentioned, the falls when in full flow are impressive. However, during the dry season (November - May) the flow is obviously much less and may not be worth the trip from Ubon. [Click the link below to see a short video of Huay Luang Falls:](#)



## **KHONG CHIAM TOWNSHIP - GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Huay Luang Falls to Khong Chiam:** The shortest route is 124 km and travel time is just over two hours. Khong Chiam is located directly north of Huay Luang Falls and is the closest town to PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK. Click the link below for directions from Huay Luang Falls to Khong Chiam:



**Recommended accommodation:** An excellent accommodation choice is the **MON-GKHON GUESTHOUSE**. The property is located nearby the restaurant area in town and motorbikes can also be hired for very reasonable rates. The rooms are large, clean and comfortable with both fan and a/c options. Click the link below for location and booking inquiries:

### **MONGKHON GUESTHOUSE**

**Cheap Eats:** There's a local market every night at the town square area (approximately 100 up the road from the Mongkhon Guesthouse) where local food (mainly barbecue) and fruit shakes can be purchased.



## KHONG CHIAM SIGHTSEEING

**Buddhist Temple & Viewpoint:** As with most Thai provincial towns there's always some interesting and attractive Buddhist Temples to have a look at. On the hill just above and behind the township is WAT THAM KHUHA SAWAN with what possibly may be the world's largest gong. There's also a gleaming white temple with some beautiful Thai style architecture. At the end of the day it's a nice spot to visit for a sunset view over the river, and township below. **Click the link below for directions from Mongkhon Guesthouse:**



**Two Colours Viewpoint:** Another advertised attraction of Khong Chiam is the TWO COLOURS RIVER VIEWPOINT. The town is situated on a headland at the convergence of the Mekong and a tributary and apparently at the right time of year it's possible to see the greener waters of the Mekong mixing with the muddy brown of the tributary. I think this requires a degree of good luck as



at the time of my visitation, the region was a month into the dry season and both rivers still looked distinctly mud brown in colour. A nice photo opportunity at the two colours viewpoint - part of a temple complex on the headland - is sunrise over the Mekong. **Click the link below for directions from Mongkhon Guesthouse:**



# PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - GENERAL INFO

## Sightseeing in Pha Taem National Park:

The tourist numbers visiting (or lack thereof) tells the real story of Pha Taem National Park. At most of the locations I visited, there were just a handful of sightseers. Additionally, I planned my tour so I was at Pha Taem during the week days and in some sites I visited, I was the only sightseer there.

**The Dry (Cool) Season:** The months between November and February are probably the best for visiting the area. It's officially the dry season and generally the skies are clear and conditions are cooler. Even so with the sun blazing down from blue skies above, the afternoon heat is still quite oppressive so any trekking should be done in the cooler morning hours. **Note:** If you want to see the waterfalls in full flow, you'll need to visit in the rainy season (June to October). By November the water flow is down to a trickle.

**Wild flowers:** For wild flower enthusiasts, the best time to visit is at the end of the rainy season (September - October)

**Entrance Fee:** There is an entrance fee of 400 THB for foreigners to enter all areas of Pha Taem National Park. The fee is good



**Wild flowers**

for the entire day so you're able to visit as many locations as possible, on the one payment.

**Five Distinct Areas:** As mentioned the spread of the park is quite extensive and accordingly there are five areas, with groupings of sightseeing attractions at each one. From my own experience the best way to visit the five areas is to divide it into a day for each, or a combination of two. I used the township of Khong Chiam as a base and traveled out each day.



**The Unusual Pha Taem Landscape**

# PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - MAIN ATTRACTIONS

## Area One

**Geological Formations:** The Sao Chaliang (mushroom rocks) are approximately one km beyond the park entry point. There are also some nature trails leading from the carpark.

**Ancient Rock Paintings:** There are four groups of paintings along a developed trail (a 3.5km loop) which starts and finishes at the national park HQ, and takes in Pha Mon Viewpoint.

**Pha Mon Viewpoint:** On the Ancient Rock Paintings Trail but can also be reached directly, on a sealed road.

## Area Two

**Soi Sawan Waterfall:** Approximately 30 km north from Khong Chiam. There is a carpark with some basic restaurants and toilets at the entry point to the park. The waterfall is a further 600-meter walk from the car park.

**Pha Chek View point:** Approximately a 3 km hike from Soi Sawan waterfall, plus the 600-meter walk from the car park (round trip hike is approximately 7.2 km).

**Pha Moei Viewpoint:** Approximately a 3.8 km hike from Soi Sawan Waterfall, plus the 600-meter walk from the car park (round trip hike is approximately 8.8 km).

## Area Three

**Thung Na Mueang Waterfall:** Approximately 48 km north from Khong Chiam.

**Saeng Chan Waterfall:** Approximately 50 km North from Khong Chiam.

## Area Four

**Wat Tham Pathiham:** A Buddhist Temple which features a cave with a large reclining Buddha; located approximately 52 km north from Khong Chiam. The 1 km access road is next to the check point and entry to Pha Chana Dai Viewpoint.

**Pha Chana Dai Viewpoint:** Approximately 64 km north from Khong Chiam, plus an 800-meter hike from the car park. Note: there is a 13 km access road, with timings for entry and exits.

**Huay Bok waterfall:** Nearby the Pha Chana Dai car park (follow the signs) - approximately 300 meters from the car park.

## Area Five

**The Giant Rock Pillars:** Approximately 66 km north of Khong Chiam.

**Tham Long Yai:** Nearby the Giant Rock Pillar (follow the signs).

**The Mekong River:** Approximately 3km from the Giant Rock Pillar.



**The mighty Mekong River**

# PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA ONE

**Area One:** This is the closet area to Khong Chiam (at the bottom end of the National Park) and also the easiest to access. Sightseeing attractions include a number of geological formations (mushroom rocks), ancient rock paintings and spectacular viewpoints. Area one is also the location of the National Park Administration HQ, and the start point for the hiking trail which takes you to the rock paintings. **Click the link below for directions from Khong Chiam:**



**Sao Chaliang:** This is a group of mushroom rocks on the road to the park HQ. It is very easy to access as the carpark is just off the sealed road. For the energetic there's also a series of nature trails which start from the carpark. **Note:** There's a large billboard (at the carpark) with a map of the routes and the various points of interest along the way.

**Ground Level Flowers:** These are actually wild flowers which grow everywhere but they tend to be seasonal and are seen pre-

dominantly at the end of the rainy season (September - October).

**Pha Mon Viewpoint:** There is a sealed road which leads straight to the viewpoint parking area. However, to see the rock paintings you'll still need to take the track down to the base of the cliff line. For this reason, it's actually better to do the three-kilometer circuit, which starts at the national park HQ, and includes Pa Mon Viewpoint.



## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA ONE

**Painting Group (Rock Art):** This is probably the highlight attraction of area one and although a three-kilometer round trip, is reasonably easy due to the track being a cement construction for most of the way.

**A 3.4 km circuit:** The trail starts nearby the National Park HQ (there's indicating signage to point you in the right direction) and drops down a cement stairway to the bottom of the cliff line. The pathway then follows the base of the cliff line to the three groupings of rock paintings, along the trail.

**Viewing Platforms:** Solid viewing platforms have been put in place at each grouping to enable sightseers to get an eye level view of the artwork.

**Pha Mon Viewpoint:** From the base of the cliff line, the trail ascends directly to Pha Mon Viewpoint and from there it's a 1.4 km hike back to the park HQ. Note: this final section of the trail is a jungle track and although there's sufficient indicating signage along the way, it undulates with uneven ground and loose rocks. Wearing adequate footwear (hiking boots) is well advised.



**The Trail**



**Rock Paintings Group Two**

## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA TWO

**Area Two:** This area is predominantly about waterfalls, hiking trails and viewpoints. **Note:** at the end of the rainy season vast fields of colourful wild flowers can also be seen. **Click the link below for directions from Khong Chiam:**



**The Parking Area:** This is a nicely shaded location with lots of old growth trees providing relief from the direct blast of the sun's rays. Along the rear edge there's a row of rustic (roofing iron and rough timber construction) Thai restaurants selling basic Thai and Isan food, as well as a good supply of cold drinks. There's also a restroom facility nearby.

**Access Road:** From the carpark there's a sealed road (a 600 meter walk) leading down to the waterfall, and the start point for the hiking trails. There's also a manned checkpoint with a park ranger to ensure you've paid your fees before entering.

**Note:** The official opening time is 0800. However, if you arrive earlier and go to the



waterfall, or a hike to viewpoint, you'll be asked to pay the entry fee on return.

**Soi Sawan Waterfall:** The main feature of this area is Soi Sawan Waterfall. This picturesque site is easy enough to access and only a six-hundred-meter hike from the parking area.

**Note:** During the dry season (November to May) this waterfall is not much more than a trickle. If you want to see a good flow of water, visit during the rainy season (June to October).



## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA TWO

**Pha Chek & Pha Moei Viewpoints:** The trail out to the viewpoints of Pha Chek and Pha Moei starts from nearby the stairway down to Soi Sawan Waterfall and is well indicated with signage (distance and directional arrows). The trail is actually a four-wheel drive track and is over gradual incline to the viewpoints. The terrain along the way is a mixture of tropical Savannah and rain forest and, if you're there at the end of the rainy season, there's water flowing everywhere. **Note:** Pha Moei Viewpoint is the more impressive of the two locations, but it's also nine hundred meters further.

**The Mekong River:** The access track to Pha Chek branches off the main track, which leads directly to the Pha Moei Viewpoint. Both viewpoints provide spectacular views across the landscape from the edge of some very high cliffs. Take care if you're feeling adventurous and want to get close to the edge. **Click the link below for video highlights of the Pha Moei hike:**



## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA TWO

**Trip Planning:** The round trip to Pha Moei, allowing for adequate time for taking photos and savoring the impressive views across the Mekong, can be done comfortably in about four hours. From my own experience it's probably better to visit **Soi Sawan Waterfall**, prior to hiking out to the viewpoints. If you arrive at the car park at around 0730 you should be back there by midday for a cold drink and a plate of fried rice, to recharge the energy levels, before pushing on to the next attraction.

**Note:** One of the great things about doing the hike to the viewpoints is being able to cool off at an excellent **swimming hole** on the way back.

**Note:** If you're planning to do Areas One and Two in a single day, it's highly recommended you start with Area Two first. You can then visit the easier to access Area One, on the way back to Khong Chiam. Most of the sites in Area One are near car parks, and don't involve long hikes.

**Two Areas in One Day:** To make the most of your 400 THB entry fee, this is a



**Swimming Hole**

suggested itinerary for Areas One and Two on the same day:

- Soi Sawan Waterfall (Area 2)
- Pha Moei Viewpoint (Area 2)
- Sao Chaliang (Area 1)
- The Rock Paintings Trail & Pha Mon Viewpoint (Area 1)

Click the link below for directions from Area 2 to Area 1:



**Pha Chek Viewpoint**

## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA THREE

**Area Three:** This area is approximately 50 km from Khong Chiam Township. The primary sightseeing attractions are two picturesque waterfalls, a **Buddhist Temple** and a hiking trail which takes in more geological features (mushroom rocks). **Note:** The directional signage off route 2112 is a bit obscured so using the Google Maps tracker is an ideal way of ensuring you don't miss the turn off.

**Thung Na Mueang Waterfall:** The road from the turn-off on Hwy 2112 will take you directly to the falls site. There's plenty of directional signage to take you straight to the car park above the falls. **Note:** About 100 meters before the car park, there's a nice Buddhist Temple on the left.

**Access:** From the car park there's a short, steep stairway down to the bottom of the waterfall. Once at the bottom there is a jumble large rocks between the end of the path and the face of the falls. If you want to get closer for a better photo opportunity, care needs to be taken when scrambling across the steep and slippery surfaces.



**Note:** As mentioned, if you travel here in the dry season (November - April) expect the water flow to be rather muted. According to the locals, the best time to see the waterfalls is in the month of September. From Thung Na Mueang Falls it's just 3 km to Sang Chan Falls. **Click the link below for directions from Khong Chiam:**



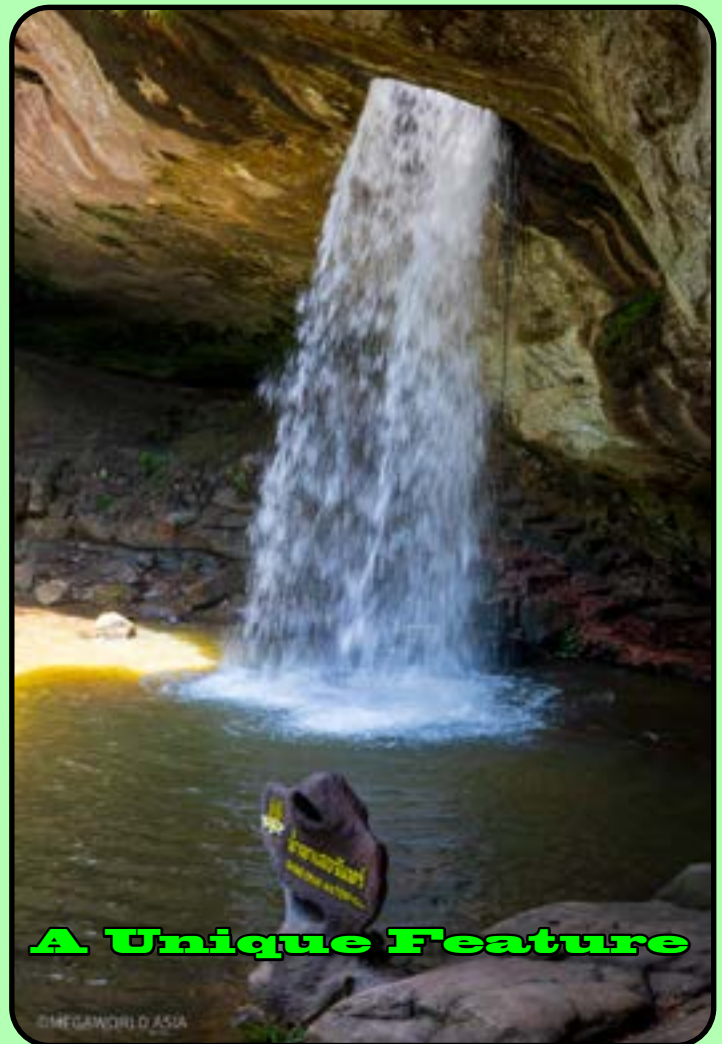
## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA THREE

**Saeng Chan Waterfall:** From Thung Na Mueang Falls it's just 3 km to Sang Chan Falls. **Click the link below for directions:**



**Saeng Chan Falls:** There is a good sealed road (distance about 10 km) down to the waterfall sites. There is a turnoff to Saeng Chan to the right which takes you directly to the carpark above the falls. From the carpark a short stairway takes you to the pool at the bottom of the falls. Before heading down to the base of the falls, check out the viewpoint at the top (just a few meters off the main trail) where you can see the stream flowing through the hole in the back of the rockface.

**Unique Feature:** Saeng Chan is quite unique as far as waterfalls go, as the water flows through a hole in the overhead strata. Even allowing for the fact it was the dry season and the flow was rather muted, it was still an interesting sight to behold.



## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA FOUR

**Area Four:** This area is just to the north of Area Three and is accessed by the same side road, from route 2112. The primary sightseeing attraction in Area Four is the majestic CHANA DAI CLIFF LINE, which is the highest in the national park. Other attractions include more geological formations, scenic waterfalls and a very interesting, remote Buddhist Temple.

**Wat Thum Patihan:** This interesting Buddhist Temple is well worth a look at, on the way to Pha Chana Dai area. There is a sealed road, which winds its way through some quite impressive scenery, after which you will arrive at a turn-off just before the entry point to the Pha Chana Dai. **Click the link below for directions from Khong Chiam:**



**Cave Temple:** The gold domed top of the temple is just visible from the road to indicate you are in the right location. Follow the narrow cement track and a few minutes later you'll be pulling into the temple parking area. The primary attraction of Wat Tham



**On The Temple Grounds**

Patihan is the cave with a reclining Buddha. However, before heading down to the cave take some time to check out the other Buddhist statues/images on the temple grounds.

**Going Underground:** For direction to the cave simply ask one of the staff on the temple grounds and they will have the designated guy put the power on for the lighting then lead you down into the cave. There is a long, winding stairway which takes you down into the subterranean world a large cavern with its impressive reclining Buddha.



**Cave with Reclining Buddha**

## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA FOUR

**Pha Chana Dai:** This is probably the premier viewpoint in the entirety of Pha Taem National Park, and it's much easier to get to than Pa Moei. **Click the link below for directions from Khong Chiam:**



**Safe Access:** There's a thirteen km sealed road all the way to the Park Rangers HQ and camping area. However, as the road is basically just one lane there are timings for driving up, and driving down. There's a checkpoint and guard house at the start of the road and you won't be allowed to enter until it's the correct time. This is obviously done to reduce the possibility of vehicle collisions on the narrow access road.

**The Park Rangers HQ:** It takes around thirty minutes to get here from the entry point. It's a slow trip as the road twists and turns its way through some magnificent terrain. Once you arrive at the HQ and camping area, a Park Ranger will check to see if you're staying overnight or doing a single day



**Huai Phok Falls**

visit; the parking areas are different for both. There are maps and indicating signs near the carpark showing the directions to the various locations.

**Huay Phok Waterfall:** This picturesque waterfall is nearby the parking area and easily accessed down a short flight of stairs.

**Note:** Huay Phok falls is on a trail which leads to other viewpoints further along the cliff-line. The furthest is approximately four km from the carpark.



**Sightseers at Pha Chana Dai**

© MEGAWORLD ASIA

## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA FOUR

**Chana Dai Cliffs:** From the Park Rangers HQ it's an easy 800-meter walk to the viewing area. This section of the cliffs is recognised as the highest in Pha Taem National Park and also, the most eastern point of Thailand. It goes without saying the views to the north, east and south are magnificent.

**Trip Planning:** Due to the fact that Areas three and four are right next to each other in the same section of the park, it makes good sense to see all attractions on the one day. This way you've only got to pay the park entry fee once.

**Timings:** The afternoon timing for visitors driving up to Pha Chana Dai is 1330 - 1530, so it makes sense to visit Saeng Chan Falls, Thung Na Muang Falls and Tham Patihan Temple prior to this.

**Camping:** Camping and overnight stays are allowed and the locals generally fill the site on weekends, to see the sunrise.



## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - AREA FIVE

**Area Five:** This is the most northern area of Pha Taem National Park and also the furthest from Khong Chiam. To be honest, it's also the least interesting. This location is probably worth an hour of your time on the way to Sam Phan Bok. **For directions from Khong Chiam, click the link below:**



**The Giant Pillars:** This sightseeing attraction, the Giant Pillars, is in Area Five of Pha Taem National Park. These large pillars are probably the biggest example of the SAO CHALIANG (Mushroom Rock) of anywhere in the National Park. Other points of interest are the small caves nearby.

**The Coffin Cave:** Also known as THAM LONG YAI, this attraction is nearby the Giant Pillars. To be honest it's not really a cave, or a cavern. Perhaps it could be classed as a shelter. The main point of interest is the wooden coffin within the shelter. This is the same type as I've seen in caves in Mae Hong Son. It first appears like a small canoe but there's actually handles on one end.



## PHA TAEM NATIONAL PARK - SUMMARY

**In conclusion:** Pha Taem national Park is quite possibly the best kept secret in Thailand tourism right now. It is definitely off the beaten track as there are no tour bus hordes scrambling over each attraction, to be seen anywhere. The majority who make their way there are normally the independent type traveler looking to get away from the mainstream tourist traps. If you want to get off the beaten track in the most eastern area of Thailand, then Pha Taem National Park is definitely worth a few days of your time.

**Location:** Ubon Ratchathani Province, THAILAND.

**Nearest town:** Khong Chiam (approximately 93 km from Ubon Ratchathani City).

**Nearest airport:** Ubon Ratchathani City.

**Nearest rail terminal:** Ubon Ratchathani City.

**Nearest car rental:** Ubon Ratchathani Airport.

**Nearest motorbike rental:** Mongkhon Guesthouse (Khong Chiam).

**Nearest ATM and accommodation:** Khong Chiam.



**Recommended accommodation in Khong Chiam:** Mongkhon Guesthouse (prices range from 500 - 600 THB per night).

**National Park access:** North from Khong Chiam via route # 2112. All sightseeing areas are on roads which branch right, off route # 2112.

**Entrance fees:** As with all national parks in Thailand, there is an entrance fee for foreigners. Rates are normally 200 - 400 THB.





Click the link to the right to see video highlights of Pha Chana Dai:



## SAM PHAN BOK - GENERAL INFO

**About:** Approximately 20 km beyond the northern end of Pha Taem National Park is the unusual geological feature called SAM PHAN BOK. Also known locally as the "Grand Canyon" on the Mekong, Sam Phan Bok is an extensive sand-stone plateau filled with rock pools, and divided by a multitude of river channels. Note: the best time to visit Sam Phan Bok is in the dry season, when the river level is much lower and the geological feature is completely exposed.

**Getting there:** Finding your way to Sam Phan Bok is a relatively easy exercise as the turnoff from route 2112 is well marked. The access road (off route 2112) is a straight run of approximately three kilometers down to the parking area at the river's edge. **Click the link below for directions from Khong Chiam:**



**Tour prices:** A boat trip (approximately 1 hour) through Sam Phan Bok = 500 THB per person. Transportation to the boat departure point is 200 THB for the round trip (individual or group).

**Onsite Facilities:** There are a number of small restaurants, and toilet facilities, next to the parking area to make a visitation a bit more comfortable.

**The tour boat departure point:** This is approximately 500 meters from the car-park, so if you don't feel like walking, transportation is also available to get the location where the boats are moored.

**Sunrise tour:** Apparently the sunrise tour through Sam Phan Bok is the best time to see the feature (lighting and colours for photography).

**Accommodation:** For overnight accommodation, if you are going to Sam Phan Bok, the nearby PLAIFAH RESORT is highly recommended.

**Note:** They also offer a tour option to view the sunrise over the Mekong and Sam Phan Bok. **Click the link below for booking inquiries:**



**The ruby red rocks of Sam Phan Bok**

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## CONTINUING NORTH ALONG THE MEKONG

**Returning to Ubon:** If you decide you've seen and done enough, and continuing northwards along the Mekong is a bit too much, then getting back to Ubon is relatively easy. **Click the link below for directions:**



**Continuing along the Mekong:** If you have your own vehicle, and decide to continue the journey northwards along the Mekong River, then driving to BUENG KAN PROVINCE in a single day is completely doable if your departure point is the PLAIFAH RESORT. If, however, you are departing from Khong Chi-am, I'd recommend an overnight stop in NAKHON PHANOM before pushing on to Bueng Kan. **Click the link below for directions to Nakhon Phanom:**



**Nakhon Phanom:** This is a very picturesque city on the western bank of the Mekong River. The location also happens to be one of the widest points of the river, with great views across to the rugged, mountainous landscape of Laos.

**The Promenade:** If you're keen for a bit of exercise, there's a promenade along the riverfront which is an excellent place for an early morning, or late evening walk. Additionally, on Friday and Saturday evenings there's an excellent night market with lots of vendors selling tasty street food. **Click the link below to see video highlights of the night market:**



**Accommodation:** If you're overnighing in Nakhon Phanom, a good accommodation choice in terms of price and location is the S VILLAS HOTEL. **Click the link below for booking inquiries:**



**BUENG KAN PROVINCE:** This out of the way location, in the far North East corner of Thailand has some amazing sightseeing attractions. Download the **Bueng Kan Interactive Travel Guide** to check it out.



**Fantastic Viewpoints  
in Bueng Kan Province**

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