

# LAOS TO GET BIG BOOST FROM ATF 2013

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***ASEAN TOURISM FORUM***

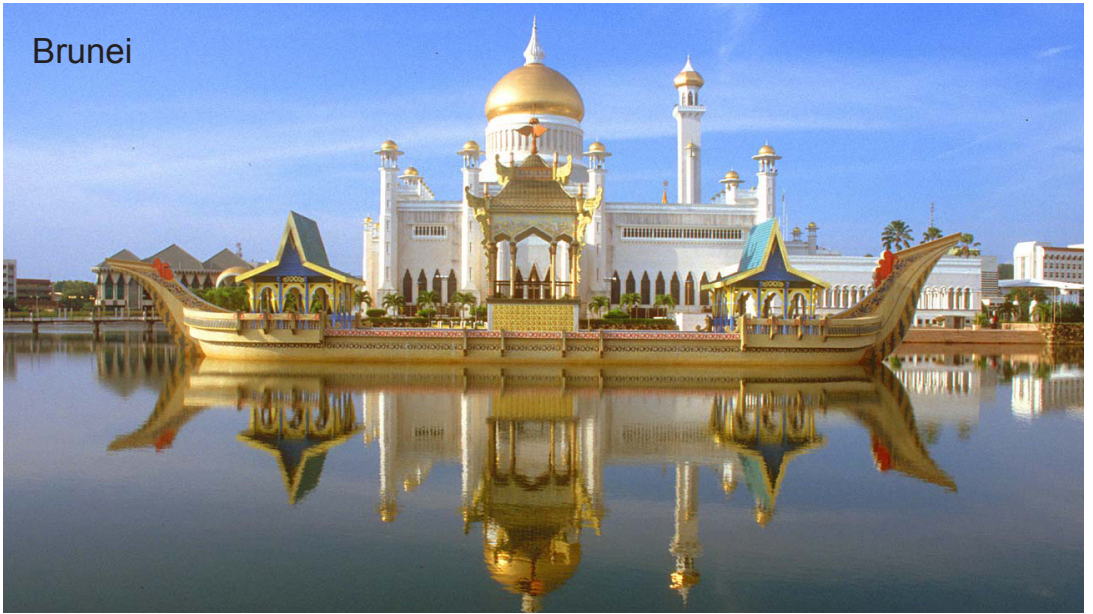
**17 - 24 January 2013**

**Vientiane • Lao PDR**

**[www.atflaos.com](http://www.atflaos.com)**

**VIENTIANE, Laos---**This country is often bypassed by international travelers hop-scotching across Asia, and that's a shame as it has much to offer from culture and heritage to adventure and entertainment.

Brunei



But all that may change when the Asean Tourism Forum (ATF) stages its 32nd annual conference here from January 17-24, an event

Cambodia



## Thailand



that attracts thousands of sellers, buyers and media from around the world. Then, under the world travel spotlight, Laos could well emerge as the next hot tourism ticket.

The conference is scheduled annually in the ten nations that comprise the ATF—Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam---in alphabetical order.

The January event will take place in Vientiane, capital of Laos, at the Lao International Trade

Exhibition and Convention Centre. Situated on the Mekong River, Vientiane is the economic heart of Laos and also is celebrated for its Buddhist culture, ecotourism and cuisine.

The ATF is a cooperative effort to promote the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), comprised of the ten countries, as one tourist destination. Throughout the 32 years it has been staging these annual conferences, tourism has increased at each site following the event and the dissemination of information.

Myanmar



Philippines



About 2,000 delegates are expected to attend the January event, many of them participating in city tours that will focus on all that Vientiane has to offer. These will include:

**CULTURE AND HERITAGE---** Buddhist temples are the key attraction, and especially Vat Sisaket, one of the city's oldest temples with thousands of Buddha statues, and Pha That Luang, the national symbol of Laos. A visit to the Lao National Museum will give

you a fascinating tour of Laos' history. Traditional dance performances take place daily at the Lao National Theatre.

**FOOD AND SHOPPING---** Lao cuisine is often fiery and filled with tasty herbs. There are a wide range of dining options along the Mekong River, an excellent spot to view the magnificent sunset. At the Morning Market (Talat Sao) and along the streets of Setthathirath and Samsenthai are many shops and stalls specializing



Malaysia



Singapore



Vietnam



## Laos



in Buddha images, hand-woven silk, handicrafts and jewelry.

LIFESTYLE AND

ENTERTAINMENT---After

shopping and touring, try a Lao massage, particularly at the traditional Lao Herbal Sauna at Wat Sok Pa Luang. After dark, there are a number of nightclubs and karaoke lounges.

ADVENTURE AND

RECREATION---On the outskirts of the city, you can go boating on the Nam Ngum Reservoir and observe wild elephants, kayak to

rural native villages or trek through pristine forests. There are also several scenic golf courses nearby.

The most popular modes of transportation are the Tuk-Tuks and Jumbos (bigger Tuk-Tuks). You simply flag one down and go out and explore the city.

“We want to give the ATF delegates a glimpse of this simply beautiful country with the pre-show city tours and post-show tours,” said Mr. Saly Phimphinit, Director General of Tourism Marketing Development.