

# Language

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This language guide offers useful words and phrases for basic communication in the five main languages spoken in the regions covered by this book. For more comprehensive coverage of these languages we recommend Lonely Planet phrasebooks: the *Southeast Asia Phrasebook* for Khmer, Lao, Thai and Vietnamese, and the *Mandarin Phrasebook* for Chinese.

## KHMER

### PRONUNCIATION

The pronunciation guide below covers the trickier parts of the transliteration system used in this chapter. It uses the Roman alphabet to give the closest equivalent to the sounds of the Khmer language. The best way to improve your pronunciation is to listen carefully to native speakers.

### Vowels

Vowels and diphthongs with an **h** at the end should be pronounced hard and aspirated (with a puff of air).

<b>aa</b>	as the 'a' in 'father'
<b>a, ah</b>	shorter and harder than <b>aa</b>
<b>i</b>	as in 'kit'
<b>uh</b>	as the 'u' in 'but'
<b>ii</b>	as the 'ee' in 'feet'
<b>ei</b>	a combination of <b>uh</b> and <b>ii</b> above
<b>eu</b>	like saying 'oo' while keeping the lips spread flat rather than rounded
<b>euH</b>	as <b>eu</b> above; pronounced short and hard
<b>oh</b>	as the 'o' in 'hose'; pronounced short and hard
<b>ow</b>	as in 'glow'
<b>u</b>	as the 'u' in 'flute'; pronounced short and hard
<b>uu</b>	as the 'oo' in 'zoo'

<b>ua</b>	as the 'ou' in 'tour'
<b>uah</b>	as <b>ua</b> above; pronounced short and hard
<b>aa-œ</b>	a tricky one that has no English equivalent; like a combination of <b>aa</b> and <b>œ</b>
<b>œ</b>	as 'er' in 'her', but more open
<b>eua</b>	combination of <b>eu</b> and <b>a</b>
<b>ia</b>	as 'ee-ya'; like the 'ee' in 'beer' without the 'r'
<b>e</b>	as in 'they'
<b>ai</b>	as in 'aisle'
<b>ae</b>	as the 'a' in 'cat'
<b>ay</b>	as <b>ai</b> above, but slightly more nasal
<b>ey</b>	as in 'prey'
<b>ao</b>	as the 'ow' in 'cow'
<b>av</b>	no English equivalent; sounds like a very nasal <b>ao</b> . The final 'v' is not pronounced.
<b>euv</b>	no English equivalent; sounds like a very nasal <b>eu</b> . The final 'v' is not pronounced.
<b>ohm</b>	as the 'ome' in 'home'
<b>am</b>	as the 'um' in 'glum'
<b>oam</b>	a combination of 'o' and 'am'
<b>eah</b>	combination of 'e' and 'ah'; pronounced short and hard
<b>ih</b>	as the 'ee' in 'teeth'; pronounced short and hard
<b>eh</b>	as the 'a' in 'date'; pronounced short and hard
<b>awh</b>	as the 'aw' in 'jaw'; pronounced short and hard
<b>oah</b>	a combination of 'o' and 'ah'; pronounced short and hard
<b>aw</b>	as the 'aw' in 'jaw'

### Consonants

Khmer uses some consonant combinations that may sound rather bizarre to Western ears and be equally difficult for Western tongues, eg 'j-r' in *j'rook* (pig), or 'ch-ng' in *ch'ngain* (delicious). For ease of pronunciation, in this guide these types of consonants are separated with an apostrophe.

<b>k</b>	as the 'g' in 'go'
<b>kh</b>	as the 'k' in 'kind'
<b>ng</b>	as the 'ng' in 'sing'; a difficult sound for Westerners to emulate. Practise by repeating 'singnging-nging-nging' until you can say 'nging' clearly.
<b>j</b>	as in 'jump'
<b>ch</b>	as in 'cheese'
<b>ny</b>	as in 'canyon'
<b>t</b>	a hard, unaspirated 't' sound with no direct equivalent in English. Similar to the 't' in 'stand'.
<b>th</b>	as the 't' in 'two', never as the 'th' in 'thanks'

**p** a hard, unaspirated 'p' sound, as the final 'p' in 'puppy'  
**ph** as the 'p' in 'pond', never as 'f'  
**r** as in 'rum', but hard and rolling, with the tongue flapping against the palate. In rapid conversation it is often omitted entirely.  
**w** as in 'would'. Contrary to the common transliteration system, there is no equivalent to the English 'v' sound in Khmer.

**ACCOMMODATION**

**Where is a (cheap) hotel?**

sahnthaakia/ohtail (thaok) neuv ai naa?  
 សណ្ឋាគារ/ផ្សេតែល(ថោក)នៅឯណា?

**Do you have a room?**

niak mian bantohp tohmm te?  
 អ្នកមានបន្ទប់ទីនេះទេ?

**How much is it per day?**

damlay muy th'ngay pohmmaan?  
 តំលៃមួយថ្ងៃប៉ុន្មាន?

**I'd like a room ...**

kh'nyohm sohm bantohp ... ខ្ញុំសុំបន្ទប់ ...

**for one person** samruhp muy niak សំរាប់ម្នាក់

**for two people** samruhp pii niak សំរាប់ពីរនាក់

**with a bathroom** dail mian bantohp tuhk ដៃលមាធរប្រដាប់ទឹក

**with a fan** dail mian dawngahl ដៃលមាធកង្ការ

**with a window** dail mian bawng-uit ដៃលមាធបង្អួច

**CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS**

**Forms of Address**

The Khmer language reflects the social standing of the speaker and subject through various personal pronouns and 'politeness words'. These range from the simple *baat* for men and *jaa* for women, placed at the end of a sentence, meaning 'yes' or 'I agree', to the very formal and archaic *Reachasahp* or 'Royal language', a separate vocabulary reserved for addressing the King and very high officials. Many of the pronouns are determined on the basis of the subject's age and sex in relation to the speaker. Foreigners are not expected to know all of these forms. The easiest and most general personal pronoun is *niak* (you), which may be used in most situations, with either sex. Men of your age or older may be called *lowk* (Mister). Women of your age or older can

be called *bawng srei* (older sister) or for more formal situations, *lowk srei* (Madam). *Bawng* is a good informal, neutral pronoun for men or women who are (or appear to be) older than you. For third person, male or female, singular or plural, the respectful form is *koat* and the common form is *ke*.

**Hello.**

johm riab sua/sua s'dei ជំរាបសួរ/សួរស្តី

**Goodbye.**

lia suhn hao-y លាសិនហើយ

**See you later.**

juab kh'nia th'ngay krao-y ជួបគ្នាថ្ងៃក្រោយ

**Yes.**

baat (used by men) បាទ

jaa (used by women) ចាស

**No.**

te ទេ

**Please.**

sohm សូម

**Thank you.**

aw kohm អរគុណ

**Excuse me/I'm sorry.**

sohm toh សុំទោស

**Hi. How are you?**

niak sohk sabaay te? អ្នកសុខសប្បាយទេ?

**I'm fine.**

kh'nyohm sohk sabaay ខ្ញុំសុខសប្បាយ

**Where are you going?**

niak teuv naa? អ្នកទៅណា? (a very common question used when meeting people, even strangers; an exact answer isn't necessary)

**Does any one here speak English?**

tii nih mian niak jeh phiasaa awngke te?

ទីនេះមានអ្នកចេះភាសាអង់គ្លេសទេ?

**I don't understand.**

kh'nyohm muhn yuhl te/kh'nyohm s' dap muhn baan te ខ្ញុំមិនយល់ទេ/ខ្ញុំស្តាប់មិនបានទេ

**DIRECTIONS**

**How can I get to ...?**

phleuv naa teuv ...? ផ្លូវណាទៅ ...?

**Is it far?**

wia neuv ch'ngaay te? វានៅឆ្ងាយទេ?

**Is it near here?**

wia neuv juht nih te? វានៅជិតនេះទេ?

**Go straight ahead.**

teuv trawng ទៅត្រង់

**Turn left.**

bawt ch'weng បត់ឆ្វេង

**Turn right.**

bawt s'dam បត់ស្តាំ

**EMERGENCIES – KHMER**

**Help!**

juay kh'nyohm phawng! ជួយខ្ញុំផង!

**Call a doctor!**

juay hav kruu paet mao! ជួយហៅគ្រូពេទ្យមក!

**Call the police!**

juay hav polih mao! ជួយហៅប៉ូលីសមក!

**Where are the toilets?**

bawngkohn neuv ai naa? បង្គន់នៅឯណា?

**NUMBERS & AMOUNTS**

Khmers count in increments of five. Thus, after reaching the number five (*bram*), the cycle begins again with the addition of one, ie 'five-one' (*bram muy*), 'five-two' (*bram pii*) and so on to 10, which begins a new cycle. This system is a bit awkward at first (for example, 18, which has three parts: 10, five and three) but with practice it can be mastered.

You may be confused by a colloquial form of counting that reverses the word order for numbers between 10 and 20 and separates the two words with *duhn*: *pii duhn dawp* for 12, *bei duhn dawp* for 13, *bram buan duhn dawp* for 19 and so on. This form is often used in markets, so listen keenly.

1	muy	មួយ
2	pii	ពីរ
3	bei	បី
4	buan	បួន
5	bram	ប្រាំ
6	bram muy	ប្រាំមួយ
7	bram pii/puhl	ប្រាំពីរ
8	bram bei	ប្រាំបី
9	bram buan	ប្រាំបួន
10	dawp	ដប់
11	dawp muy	ដប់មួយ
12	dawp pii	ដប់ពីរ
16	dawp bram muy	ដប់ប្រាំមួយ
20	m'phei	ម្ភៃ
21	m'phei muy	ម្ភៃមួយ
30	saamsuhp	សាមសិប
40	saisuhp	សែសិប
100	muy roy	មួយរយ

1000	muy poan	មួយពាន់
1,000,000	muy lian	មួយលាន

**SHOPPING & SERVICES**

**I'm looking for the ...**

kh'nyohm rohk ... ខ្ញុំរក ...

**Where is a/the ...**

... neuv ai naa? ... នៅឯណា?

<b>bank</b>	ធនាគារ
th'niakia	ផ្សារ
<b>hospital</b>	មន្ទីរពេទ្យ
mohntii paet	ផ្សារ
<b>market</b>	ផ្សារ
p'saa	ផ្សារ
<b>police station</b>	ប៉ូលីស
poh polih/	ប៉ូលីស
s'thaanii nohkohbaal	ស្ថានីយធនាគារ
<b>post office</b>	ស្ថានីយធនាគារ
praisuhni	ស្ថានីយធនាគារ
<b>public telephone</b>	ទូរស័ព្ទសាធារណៈ
turasahp saathiaranah	ទូរស័ព្ទសាធារណៈ
<b>public toilet</b>	បង្គន់សាធារណៈ
bawngkohn saathiaranah	បង្គន់សាធារណៈ

**How much is it?**

nih th'lay pohmmaan? នេះថ្លៃប៉ុន្មាន?

**That's too much.**

th'lay pek ថ្លៃពេក

**TIME & DAYS**

**What time is it?**

eileuv nih maong pohmmaan? ឥឡូវនេះម៉ោងប៉ុន្មាន?

**today**

th'ngay nih ថ្ងៃនេះ

**tomorrow**

th'ngay s'aik ថ្ងៃស្អែក

**Monday**

th'ngay jahn ថ្ងៃចន្ទ

**Tuesday**

th'ngay ahngkia ថ្ងៃអង្គារ

**Wednesday**

th'ngay poh ថ្ងៃពុធ

**Thursday**

th'ngay prohoah ថ្ងៃព្រហស្បតិ៍

**Friday**

th'ngay sohk ថ្ងៃសុក្រ

**Saturday**

th'ngay sav ថ្ងៃសៅរ៍

**Sunday**

th'ngay aatuht ថ្ងៃអាទិត្យ

TRANSPORT

What time does the ... leave?

... jein maong pohnmaan? ... ເຮັດໜີ້ເຮັດຜູ້ສູ່ຊາ?

Table with 2 columns: English word and Lao pronunciation. Includes boat, bus, train, plane.

Table with 2 columns: English word and Lao pronunciation. Includes airport, bus station, bus stop, train station.

LAO

PRONUNCIATION

Vowels

Table listing Lao vowels and their English equivalents. Includes i, ii, ai, aa, a, ae, eh, oe, eu, u, uu, aai, ao, aw, o, oh, eua, ia, ua, uay, iu, iaw, aew, ehw, ew, oei, awy, ohy.

Consonants

Transliterated consonants are mostly pronounced as per their English counterparts (the exceptions are listed below).

Table listing Lao consonants k, kh, ng, j, ny, t, th, p, ph with their English equivalents and descriptions.

Tones

Lao is a tonal language, whereby many identical phonemes are differentiated only by tone (changes in the pitch of a speaker's voice).

Table describing Lao tones: dji (good) - low tone; het (do) - mid tone; heua (boat) - high tone; sdam (three) - rising tone; sao (morning) - high falling tone; khao (rice) - low falling tone.

ACCOMMODATION

Where's a ...?

Table listing accommodation types and their Lao names: camping ground, guesthouse, hotel.

EMERGENCIES – LAO

Table listing emergency phrases: Help!, Go away!, I'm lost., Where are the toilets?, Call a doctor!, Call the police!.

Table listing phrases: Do you have a ...?, double room, single room.

Table listing phrases: How much is it per ...?, night, person.

Table listing phrases: bathroom, toilet.

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Table listing essential phrases: Greetings/Hello., Goodbye. (general farewell), Goodbye. (person leaving), Goodbye. (person staying), See you later., Thank you., Thank you very much., Excuse me.

How are you?

Table listing phrases: How are you?, I'm fine., And you?, Can you speak English?, I don't understand.

NUMBERS

Table listing Lao numbers from 0 to 100,000.

SHOPPING & SERVICES

Table listing phrases: Where is the ...?, ... ຢູ່ໃສ?

**I'm looking for (the) ...**  
*khàw y sàwk hǎa ...*

<b>bank</b> <i>thánáakhán</i>	ທະນາຄານ
<b>hospital</b> <i>hóhng mǎw</i>	ໂຮງໝໍ
<b>pharmacy</b> <i>hàan khái yqa</i>	ຮ້ານຂາຍຢາ
<b>post office</b> <i>pqi-sá-níi (hóhng sǎai)</i>	ໄປສະນີ (ໂຮງສາຍ)
<b>public toilet</b> <i>hòrng nám sǎ-ta-là-nà</i>	ຫ້ອງນ້ຳສາທາລະນະ
<b>telephone</b> <i>thóhlasáp</i>	ໂທລະສັບ

**How much (for) ...?**  
*... thao dǎi?*

**The price is very high.**  
*láakháa phéng láai*

... ເທົ່າໃດ?	... ເທົ່າໃດ?
ລາຄາແພງຫລາຍ	ລາຄາແພງຫລາຍ

**TIME & DATES**

**What time is it?**  
*wáir-láh ják mǎhng*

**At what time?**  
*dorn ják mǎhng*

**At ...**  
*dorn ...*

**today**  
*mèu nǐi*

**tomorrow**  
*mèu eun*

ເວລາຈັກໂມງ?	ເວລາຈັກໂມງ?
ຕອນຈັກໂມງ?	ຕອນຈັກໂມງ?
ຕອນ ...	ຕອນ ...
ມື້ນີ້	ມື້ນີ້
ມື້ອື່ນ	ມື້ອື່ນ

<b>Monday</b> <i>wán jǎn</i>	ວັນຈັນ
<b>Tuesday</b> <i>wán qngkhán</i>	ວັນອັງຄານ
<b>Wednesday</b> <i>wán phut</i>	ວັນພຸດ
<b>Thursday</b> <i>wán phahát</i>	ວັນພະຫັດ
<b>Friday</b> <i>wán súk</i>	ວັນສຸກ
<b>Saturday</b> <i>wán sǎo</i>	ວັນເສົາ
<b>Sunday</b> <i>wán qathit</i>	ວັນອາທິດ

**TRANSPORT**

**What time will the ... leave?**  
*... já àwk ják mǎhng?*

<b>boat</b> <i>héua</i>	ເຮືອ
<b>bus</b> <i>lot</i>	ລົດ

<b>minivan</b> <i>lot túu</i>	ລົດຕູ້
<b>plane</b> <i>héua bín</i>	ເຮືອບິນ

**What time (do we, does it, etc) arrive there?**  
*já pai háwt phún ják mǎhng?* ຈະໄປຮອດພູ້ນຈັກໂມງ?

**Where is the ...?**  
*... yúu sǎi?*

<b>airport</b> <i>doen bín</i>	ຢູ່ໃສ?
<b>bus station</b> <i>sathánii lot pájǎm</i>	ເດີນບິນ
<b>bus stop</b> <i>bawn jàwt lot pájǎm</i>	ສະຖານີລົດປະຈຳທາງ
<b>bus stop</b> <i>tháng</i>	ບ່ອນຈອດລົດປະຈຳທາງ

**Directions**

**I want to go to ...**  
*khàw y yáak pqi ...*

**Go straight ahead.**  
*pqi seu-seu*

**How far?**  
*kai thao dǎi?*

**near/not near**  
*kái/baw kái*

**far/not far**  
*kai/baw kai*

**Turn ...**  
*liaw ...*

ຂ້ອຍຍາກໄປ ...	ຂ້ອຍຍາກໄປ ...
ໄປຊື່ງ	ໄປຊື່ງ
ໄກເທົ່າໃດ?	ໄກເທົ່າໃດ?
ໃກ້/ບໍ່ໃກ້	ໃກ້/ບໍ່ໃກ້
ໄກ/ບໍ່ໄກ	ໄກ/ບໍ່ໄກ
ລັງວ ...	ລັງວ ...
ຊ້າຍ	ຊ້າຍ
ຂວາ	ຂວາ

**MANDARIN CHINESE**

**PRONUNCIATION**

**Vowels**

<b>ian</b>	as the word 'yen'
<b>ie</b>	as the English word 'yeah'
<b>o</b>	as in 'or', with no 'r' sound
<b>ou</b>	as the 'oa' in 'boat'
<b>u</b>	as in 'flute'
<b>ui</b>	as the word 'way'
<b>uo</b>	like a 'w' followed by 'o'
<b>yu/ü</b>	like 'ee' with lips pursed

**Consonants**

<b>c</b>	as the 'ts' in 'bits'
<b>ch</b>	as in 'chip', but with the tongue curled up and back

<b>q</b>	as the 'ch' in 'cheese'
<b>r</b>	as the 's' in 'pleasure'
<b>sh</b>	as in 'ship', but with the tongue curled up and back
<b>x</b>	as in 'ship'
<b>z</b>	as the 'dz' in 'suds'
<b>zh</b>	as the 'j' in 'judge', but with the tongue curled up and back

**Tones**

Mandarin has four tones – high, rising, falling-rising and falling, plus a fifth 'neutral' tone which you can all but ignore. To illustrate the importance of getting tones right, look at the word *ma*, which has four different meanings according to tone:

<i>mā</i> (mother) – high tone
<i>má</i> (hemp, numb) – rising tone
<i>mǎ</i> (horse) – falling-rising tone
<i>mà</i> (scold, swear) – falling tone

**ACCOMMODATION**

**I'm looking for a ...**

<i>Wǒ yào zhǎo ...</i>	我要找...
<b>camping ground</b> <i>lùyíngdì</i>	露营地
<b>guesthouse</b> <i>bīngguǎn</i>	宾馆
<b>hostel</b> <i>zhāodàisuǒ/lǚshè</i>	招待所/旅社
<b>hotel</b> <i>lǚguǎn</i>	旅馆
<b>tourist hotel</b> <i>bīngguǎn/fàndiàn/jiǔdiàn</i>	宾馆/饭店/酒店
<b>youth hostel</b> <i>qīngnián lǚshè</i>	青年旅舍

**I'd like (a) ...**

<i>Wǒ xiǎng yào ...</i>	我想要...
<b>bed</b> <i>yí ge chuángwèi</i>	一个床位
<b>single room</b> <i>yījiān dānrénfáng</i>	一间单人房
<b>bed for two</b> <i>shuāngrén chuáng</i>	双人床
<b>room with two beds</b> <i>shuāngrénfáng</i>	双人房

**How much is it ...?**  
*... duōshǎo qián?*

... ຈະອອກຈັກໂມງ?	... ຈະອອກຈັກໂມງ?
<b>per night</b> <i>měitiān wǎnshàng</i>	每天晚上
<b>per person</b> <i>měigerén</i>	每个人

**EMERGENCIES – MANDARIN**

**Help!**  
*Jiùmíng a!* 救命啊!

**I'm lost.**  
*Wǒ mílùle.* 我迷路了

**Leave me alone!**  
*Bié fán wǒ!* 别烦我!

**Where are the toilets?**  
*Cèsuǒ zài nǎr?* 厕所 在哪儿?

**Call ... !**  
*Qǐng jiào ...!* 请叫...!

**a doctor**  
*yīshēng* 医生

**the police**  
*jǐngchá* 警察

**CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS**

**Hello.**

<i>Nǐ hǎo.</i>	你好
<i>Nǐn hǎo. (pol)</i>	您好
<i>Zàijiàn.</i>	再见
<i>Qǐng.</i>	请
<i>Xièxie.</i>	谢谢
<i>Duōxiè.</i>	多谢
<i>Búkèqǐ.</i>	不客气
<i>Qǐng wèn, ...</i>	请问, ...
<i>Duìbuqǐ.</i>	对不起

**Do you speak English?**  
*Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?* 你会说英语吗?

**I don't understand.**  
*Wǒ tīngbùdǒng.* 我听不懂

**Please write it down.**  
*Qǐng xiěxiàlái.* 请写下来

**Yes & No**

There are no specific words in Mandarin that specifically mean 'yes' and 'no' when used in isolation. When a question is asked, the verb is repeated to indicate the affirmative. A response in the negative is formed by using the word *bù* (meaning 'no') before the verb.

**Are you going to Shanghai?**  
*Nǐ qù shànghǎi ma?* 你去上海吗?

**Yes.**  
*Qù. ('go')* 去

**No.**  
*Bú qù. ('no go')* 不去

**No.**  
*Méi yǒu. ('not have')* 没有

**No.**  
*Búshì. ('not so')* 不是

## NUMBERS

0	líng	零
1	yī, yāo	一, 幺
2	èr, liǎng	二, 两
3	sān	三
4	sì	四
5	wǔ	五
6	liù	六
7	qī	七
8	bā	八
9	jiǔ	九
10	shí	十
11	shíyī	十一
12	shí'èr	十二
20	èrshí	二十
21	èrshíyī	二十一
22	èrshíèr	二十二
30	sānshí	三十
40	sìshí	四十
50	wǔshí	五十
60	liùshí	六十
70	qīshí	七十
80	bāshí	八十
90	jiǔshí	九十
100	yībǎi	一百
1000	yìqiān	一千
2000	liǎngqiān	两千

## SHOPPING &amp; SERVICES

I'm looking for a/the ...	我在找...
Wǎ zài zhǎo ...	我在找...
bank	银行
yínháng	银行
chemist/pharmacy	药店
yàodiàn	药店
hospital	医院
yīyuàn	医院
market	市场
shìchǎng	市场
police	警察
jǐngchá	警察
post office	邮局
yóujú	邮局
public toilet	公共厕所
gōnggòng cèsuǒ	公共厕所

## How much is it?

Duōshǎo qián? 多少钱?

## That's too expensive.

Tài guìle. 太贵了

## TIME &amp; DATES

## What's the time?

Jǐ diǎn? 几点?

## When?

Shénme shíhòu? 什么时候?

... hour	... diǎn	... 点
... minute	... fēn	... 分
now	xiànzài	现在
today	jīntiān	今天
tomorrow	míngtiān	明天

Monday	xīngqīyī	星期一
Tuesday	xīngqī'èr	星期二
Wednesday	xīngqīsān	星期三
Thursday	xīngqīsì	星期四
Friday	xīngqīwǔ	星期五
Saturday	xīngqīliù	星期六
Sunday	xīngqītiān	星期天

## TRANSPORT

## What time does ... leave/arrive?

... jǐdiǎn kāi/dào? ... 几点开/到?

## boat

chuán 船

## intercity bus/coach

chángtú qìchē 长途汽车

## local/city bus

gōnggòng qìchē 公共汽车

## plane

fēijī 飞机

## train

huǒchē 火车

## airport

fēijīchǎng 飞机场

## long-distance bus station

chángtú qìchē zhàn 长途汽车站

## train station

huǒchē zhàn 火车站

## Directions

## Where is (the) ...?

... zài nǎr? ... 在哪儿?

## I want to go to ...

Wǒ yào qù ... 我要去...

## Go straight ahead.

Yízhí zǒu. 一直走

## Turn left.

Zuǒ zhuǎn. 左转

## Turn right.

Yòu zhuǎn. 右转

## near

jìn 近

## far

yuǎn 远

## Could you show me (on the map)?

Nǐ néng bùnéng (zài dìtú shàng) zhǐ gěi wǒ kàn?

你能不能(在地图上)指给我看?

## THAI

## PRONUNCIATION

The 'ph' in a Thai word is always pronounced like an English 'p', not as an 'f'.

## Tones

Thai is a tonal language, where changes in pitch can affect meaning. The range of all five tones is relative to each speaker's vocal range, so there's no fixed 'pitch' intrinsic to the language. The five tones of Thai:

*bàat* (baht – the Thai currency) – low tone; a flat pitch pronounced at the relative bottom of the vocal range  
*dīi* (good) – level or mid tone; pronounced flat, at the relative middle of the vocal range, no tone mark is used  
*mái* (no/not) – falling tone; pronounced as if emphasising a word, or calling someone's name from afar  
*máa* (horse) – high tone; pronounced near the relative top of the vocal range, as level as possible  
*sám* (three) – rising tone; sounds like the inflection used by English speakers to imply a question

## ACCOMMODATION

## I'm looking for a ...

phǒm/dī-chǎn kam-lang hǎa ...

ผม/ดิฉันกำลังหา...

## guesthouse

bǎan pháak/ บ้านพัก/

kết hóc ('guest house') เกสต์เฮาส์

## hotel

rohng raem โรงแรม

## youth hostel

bǎan yao-wá-chon บ้านเยาวชน

## Do you have any rooms available?

mīi háwng wáang mái? มีห้องว่างไหม?

## I'd like (a) ...

tǎwng kaan ...

## ต้องการ ...

## bed

tiang nawn เตียงนอน

## single room

hǎwng diaw ห้องเดี่ยว

## room with two beds

hǎwng thǐi mīi tiang ห้องที่มีเตียง

sǎwng tua สองตัว

## ordinary room (with fan)

hǎwng tham-má- ห้องธรรมดา

daa (mīi páat lom) (มีพัดลม)

## EMERGENCIES – THAI

Help!	ช่วยด้วย
chúay dúay!	ช่วยด้วย
I'm lost.	ฉันหลงทาง
chǎn lǒng thaang	ฉันหลงทาง
Go away!	ไปซิ
pai sí!	ไปซิ
Call ...!	เรียก...หน่อย
riak ... nǎwy	เรียก...หน่อย
a doctor	mǎw หมอ
the police	tam-rúat ตำรวจ

How much is it ...? ... thǎo rai? ...เท่าไร?

per night kheun lá คืนละ

per person khon lá คนละ

## CONVERSATION &amp; ESSENTIALS

When being polite, a male speaker ends his sentence with *khǎp* and a female speaker says *khá*; it's also the common way to answer 'yes' to a question or show agreement.

## Hello.

sà-wát-dīi (khǎp/khá) สวัสดี(ครับ/ค่ะ)

## Goodbye.

laa kǎwn ลาก่อน

## Yes.

chǎi ใช่

## No.

mái chǎi ไม่ใช่

## Please.

kà-rú-naa กรุณา

## Thank you.

khǎw phun ขอบคุน

## Excuse me.

khǎw à-phai ขออภัย

## Sorry. (forgive me)

khǎw thót ขอโทษ

## How are you?

sà-bai dīi rǎu? สบายดีหรือ?

## I'm fine, thanks.

sà-bai dīi สบายดี

## NUMBERS

0	sǔn	ศูนย์
1	nèung	หนึ่ง
2	sǎwng	สอง
3	sám	สาม
4	sīi	สี่
5	háa	ห้า

6	<i>hòk</i>	หก
7	<i>jèt</i>	เจ็ด
8	<i>pàet</i>	แปด
9	<i>káo</i>	เก้า
10	<i>síp</i>	สิบ
11	<i>síp-èt</i>	สิบเอ็ด
12	<i>síp-sáwng</i>	สิบสอง
13	<i>síp-sám</i>	สิบสาม
14	<i>síp-sii</i>	สิบสี่
15	<i>síp-háa</i>	สิบห้า
16	<i>síp-hòk</i>	สิบหก
17	<i>síp-jèt</i>	สิบเจ็ด
18	<i>síp-pàet</i>	สิบแปด
19	<i>síp-káo</i>	สิบเก้า
20	<i>yíi-síp</i>	ยี่สิบ
21	<i>yíi-síp-èt</i>	ยี่สิบเอ็ด
22	<i>yíi-síp-sáwng</i>	ยี่สิบสอง
30	<i>sám-síp</i>	สามสิบ
40	<i>sii-síp</i>	สี่สิบ
50	<i>háa-síp</i>	ห้าสิบ
60	<i>hòk-síp</i>	หกสิบ
70	<i>jèt-síp</i>	เจ็ดสิบ
80	<i>pàet-síp</i>	แปดสิบ
90	<i>káo-síp</i>	เก้าสิบ
100	<i>nèung ráwy</i>	หนึ่งร้อย
200	<i>sáwng ráwy</i>	สองร้อย
300	<i>sám ráwy</i>	สามร้อย
1000	<i>nèung phan</i>	หนึ่งพัน
2000	<i>sáwng phan</i>	สองพัน
10,000	<i>nèung mèn</i>	หมื่น
100,000	<i>nèung sán</i>	แสน

## SHOPPING & SERVICES

<b>I'm looking for ...</b>	
<i>phóm/di-chán háa ...</i>	ผม/ดิฉันหา...
<b>a bank</b>	ธนาคาร
<i>thá-naa-khaan</i>	
<b>the market</b>	ตลาด
<i>ta-làat</i>	
<b>the post office</b>	ไปรษณีย์
<i>prai-sà-nii</i>	
<b>a public toilet</b>	ห้องน้ำสาธารณะ
<i>háwng nám</i>	
<i>sáa-thaa-rá-ná</i>	
<b>the telephone centre</b>	ศูนย์โทรศัพท์
<i>sún thoh-rá-sáp</i>	

**the tourist office**  
*sám-nák ngaan*  
*tháwng thiaw* สำนักงานท่องเที่ยว

**I'd like to buy ...**  
*yàakjà séu ...* อยากจะซื้อ...

**How much is it?**  
*tháo rai?* เท่าไร?

**It's too expensive.**  
*phaeng koen pai* แพงเกินไป

## TIME & DAYS

**What time is it?**  
*kii mohng láew?* ทีโมงแล้ว?

**It's (8 o'clock).**  
*pàet mohng láew* แปดโมงแล้ว

**today** *wan níi* วันนี้  
**tomorrow** *phrúng níi* พรุ่งนี้

**Monday** *wan jan* วันจันทร์

**Tuesday** *wan ang-khaan* วันอังคาร

**Wednesday** *wan phút* วันพุธ

**Thursday** *wan phá-réu-hát* วันพฤหัสบดี

**Friday** *wan sùk* วันศุกร์

**Saturday** *wan sáo* วันเสาร์

**Sunday** *wan aa-thít* วันอาทิตย์

## TRANSPORT

**What time does the ... leave?**  
*...jà àwvk kii mohng?*

... จะออกทีโมง?

**What time does the ... arrive?**  
*...jà thǎung kii mohng?*

... จะถึงทีโมง?

<b>boat</b>	<i>reua</i>	เรือ
<b>bus (city)</b>	<i>rót meh</i>	รถเมล์
<b>bus (intercity)</b>	<i>rót thua</i>	รถทัวร์
<b>plane</b>	<i>khreuang bin</i>	เครื่องบิน
<b>train</b>	<i>rót fai</i>	รถไฟ

**airport**  
*sa-nám bin* สนามบิน

**bus station**  
*sa-thaa-nii khòn sòng* สถานีขนส่ง

**bus stop**  
*pái rót meh* ป้ายรถเมล์

**train station**  
*sa-thaa-nii rót fai* สถานีรถไฟ

## Directions

**Where is (the) ...?**  
*... yúu thii nái?* ...อยู่ที่ไหน?

**Can you show me (on the map)?**  
*hái duu (nai phán thii)* ให้ดู(ในแผนที่)  
*dái mǎi?* ได้ไหม?

**(Go) Straight ahead.**  
*trong pai* ตรงไป

**Turn left.**  
*líaw sái* เลี้ยวซ้าย

**Turn right.**  
*líaw khwáa* เลี้ยวขวา

**far**  
*klai* ไกล

**near/not far**  
*klái/mái klai* ใกล้/ไม่ไกล

## VIETNAMESE

There are differences between the Vietnamese of the north and the Vietnamese of the south; where different forms are used in this guide, they are indicated by 'N' for the north and 'S' for the south.

## TONES & PRONUNCIATION

To help you make sense of what is (for non-Vietnamese) a very tricky writing system, the words and phrases in this language guide include pronunciations that use a written form more familiar to English speakers. The symbols used for marking the tones are the same as those used in standard written Vietnamese.

## SYMBOL & PRONUNCIATION

<b>c, k</b>	<b>g</b>	an unaspirated 'k'
<b>đ</b>	<b>đ</b>	(with crossbar) as in 'do'
<b>d</b>	<b>z/y</b>	(without crossbar) as the 'z' in 'zoo' (N); as the 'y' in 'yes' (S)
<b>gi-</b>	<b>z/y</b>	as a 'z' (N); as a 'y' (S)
<b>kh-</b>	<b>ch</b>	as the 'ch' in German <i>buch</i>
<b>ng-</b>	<b>ng</b>	as the '-nga-' sound in 'long ago'
<b>nh-</b>	<b>ny</b>	as the 'ny' in 'canyon'
<b>ph-</b>	<b>f</b>	as in 'farm'
<b>r</b>	<b>z/r</b>	as 'z' (N); as 'r' (S)
<b>s</b>	<b>s/sh</b>	as 's' (N); as 'sh' (S)
<b>tr-</b>	<b>ch/tr</b>	as 'ch' (N); as 'tr' (S)
<b>th-</b>	<b>t</b>	a strongly aspirated 't'
<b>x</b>	<b>s</b>	like an 's'
<b>-ch</b>	<b>k</b>	like a 'k'
<b>-ng</b>	<b>ng</b>	as the 'ng' in 'long' but with the lips closed; sounds like English 'm'
<b>-nh</b>	<b>ng</b>	as in 'singing'

## EMERGENCIES – VIETNAMESE

<b>Help!</b>	
<i>Cứu tôi!</i>	<i>gũhr-oo dóy!</i>
<b>I'm lost.</b>	
<i>Tôi bị lạc đường.</i>	<i>doi bej laq đuh-èng</i>
<b>Leave me alone!</b>	
<i>Thôi!</i>	<i>toy!</i>
<b>Where's the toilet?</b>	
<i>Nhà vệ sinh ở đâu?</i>	<i>nyaà vệ sinh ở đoh?</i>
<b>Please call ...</b>	
<i>Làm ơn gọi ...</i>	<i>laàm em goy ...</i>
<b>a doctor</b>	
<i>bác sĩ</i>	<i>baák seế</i>
<b>the police</b>	
<i>công an</i>	<i>gắwm aan</i>

There are six tones in spoken Vietnamese. Thus, every syllable in Vietnamese can be pronounced six different ways. For example, depending on the tones, the word *ma* can be read to mean 'phantom', 'but', 'mother', 'rice seedling', 'tomb' or 'horse'. The six tones are represented by five diacritical marks in the written language (the first tone is left unmarked).

*ma* (ghost) – middle of the vocal range  
*mà* (which) – begins low and falls lower  
*mả* (tomb) – begins low, dips and then rises to higher pitch  
*mã* (horse) – begins high, dips slightly, then rises sharply  
*mạ* (rice seedling) – begins low, falls to a lower level, then stops  
*má* (mother) – begins high and rises sharply

## ACCOMMODATION

<b>Where is there a (cheap) ...?</b>	
<i>Đầu có ... (rẻ tièn)?</i>	<i>đoh có ... (zà đee-ùhn)?</i>
<b>camping ground</b>	
<i>noi cắm trại</i>	<i>ner-ee gũhm chại</i>
<b>guesthouse</b>	
<i>nhà khách</i>	<i>nyaà kaák</i>
<b>hotel</b>	
<i>khách sạn</i>	<i>kaák sạn</i>
<b>air-conditioning</b>	
<i>máy lạnh</i>	<i>máy lạq</i>
<b>bathroom</b>	
<i>phòng tắm</i>	<i>tòm dúhm</i>
<b>hot water</b>	
<i>nước nóng</i>	<i>nuhr-érk nóm</i>
<b>toilet</b>	
<i>nhà vệ sinh</i>	<i>nyaà vệ sinh</i>

<b>I'd like (a) ...</b>	
Tôi muốn ...	<i>doy moo-úhn ...</i>
<b>single room</b>	
phòng đơn	<i>fòm dem</i>
<b>double-bed</b>	
giường đôi	<i>zuhr-èmg doy</i>
<b>room with two beds</b>	
phòng gồm hai giường ngủ	<i>fòm gawm hai zuhr-èmg ngoó</i>
<b>How much is it ...?</b>	
Giá bao nhiêu ...?	<i>zaá bow nyee-oo ...?</i>
<b>per night</b>	
một đêm	<i>mawt dem</i>
<b>per person</b>	
một người	<i>mawt nguhr-è</i>

## CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

There are many different forms of address in Vietnamese. The safest way to address people is: *ông* (to a man of any status), *anh* (to a young man), *bà* (to a middle-aged or older woman), *cô* (to a young woman) and *em* (to a child).

<b>Hello.</b>	
Xin chào.	<i>sin jòw</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b>	
Tạm biệt.	<i>dym bee-ệt</i>
<b>Please.</b>	
Làm ơn.	<i>lám em</i>
<b>Thank you.</b>	
Cảm ơn.	<i>kám ern</i>
<b>Excuse me.</b>	
Xin lỗi.	<i>sin lô-ee</i>
<b>Yes.</b>	
Vâng. (N)	<i>vang</i>
Dạ. (S)	<i>yạ</i>
<b>No.</b>	
Không.	<i>kom</i>
<b>How are you?</b>	
Có khỏe không?	<i>káw kwáir kom?</i>
<b>Fine, thank you.</b>	
Khỏe, cảm ơn.	<i>kwáir kám ern</i>
<b>Do you speak English?</b>	
Bạn có nói được tiếng Anh không?	<i>Bạn gố ngy duhr-erik đing aang kawm?</i>
<b>I (don't) understand.</b>	
Tôi (không) hiểu.	<i>doy (kawm) heé-oo</i>

## NUMBERS

1	một	<i>mawt</i>
2	hai	<i>hai</i>
3	ba	<i>baa</i>

4	bốn	<i>bawn</i>
5	năm	<i>nuhm</i>
6	sáu	<i>sóh</i>
7	bảy	<i>báy</i>
8	tám	<i>dúhm</i>
9	chín	<i>jín</i>
10	mười	<i>muhr-è</i>
11	mười một	<i>muhr-è mọt</i>
19	mười chín	<i>muhr-è jín</i>
20	hai mươi	<i>hai muhr-ee</i>
21	hai mươi mốt	<i>hai muhr-ee máwt</i>
22	hai mươi hai	<i>hai muhr-ee hai</i>
30	ba mươi	<i>ba muhr-ee</i>
90	chín mươi	<i>jín muhr-ee</i>
100	một trăm	<i>mawt chuhm</i>
200	hai trăm	<i>hai chuhm</i>
900	chín trăm	<i>jín chuhm</i>
1000	một nghìn (N)	<i>mawt ngyn</i>
	một ngàn (S)	<i>mọt ngaàn</i>
10,000	mười nghìn (N)	<i>muhr-è ngyn</i>
	mười ngàn (S)	<i>muhr-è ngaàn</i>

## SHOPPING & SERVICES

<b>I'm looking for ...</b>	
Tôi tìm ...	<i>doy tìm ...</i>
<b>a bank</b>	
ngân hàng	<i>nguhn haàng</i>
<b>the hospital</b>	
nhà thương	<i>nyaà tuhr-emg</i>
<b>the market</b>	
chợ	<i>jer</i>
<b>the post office</b>	
bưu điện	<i>buhr-oo dee-yhn</i>
<b>a public phone</b>	
phòng điện thoại	<i>fòm dee-yhn twaj</i>
<b>a public toilet</b>	
phòng vệ sinh	<i>fòm vệ sing</i>
<b>tourist office</b>	
văn phòng hướng dẫn du lịch	<i>vuhn fòm huhr-émg zúhn zoo lik</i>

<b>How much is this?</b>	
Cái này giá bao nhiêu?	<i>gáí này zaá bow nyee-oo?</i>
<b>It's too expensive.</b>	
Cái này quá mắc.	<i>gáí này gwaá múhk</i>

## TIME & DAYS

<b>What time is it?</b>	
Mấy giờ rồi?	<i>máy giờ zòy?</i>
<b>It's ... o'clock.</b>	
Bây giờ là ... giờ.	<i>bay zèr là ... zèr</i>
<b>now</b>	
bây giờ	<i>bay zèr</i>

<b>today</b>	
hôm nay	<i>hawm nay</i>
<b>tomorrow</b>	
ngày mai	<i>ngày mai</i>
<b>Monday</b>	
thứ hai	<i>túhr hai</i>
<b>Tuesday</b>	
thứ ba	<i>túhr baa</i>
<b>Wednesday</b>	
thứ tư	<i>túhr duhr</i>
<b>Thursday</b>	
thứ năm	<i>túhr nuhm</i>
<b>Friday</b>	
thứ sáu	<i>túhr sóh</i>
<b>Saturday</b>	
thứ bảy	<i>túhr báy</i>
<b>Sunday</b>	
chủ nhật	<i>jòw nhựt</i>

## TRANSPORT

<b>What time does the (first)... leave/arrive?</b>	
Chuyến ... (sớm nhất) chạy lúc mấy giờ?	
<i>jwee-úhn ... (sém nyúht) jay lúp máy zèr?</i>	
<b>boat</b>	
tàu/thuyền	<i>dòw/twee-úhn</i>
<b>bus</b>	
xe buýt	<i>sa beét</i>

<b>plane</b>	
máy bay	<i>máy bay</i>
<b>train</b>	
xe lửa	<i>sa lúhr-uh</i>

## Directions

<b>Where is ...?</b>	
Ở đâu ...?	<i>ờ đơw ...?</i>
<b>I want to go to ...</b>	
Tôi muốn đi ...	<i>doy moo-úhn đee ...</i>
<b>Go straight ahead.</b>	
Thẳng tới trước.	<i>túhng der-éé chuhr-érk</i>
<b>Can you show me (on the map)?</b>	
Xin chỉ giúp (trên bản đồ này)?	<i>sin jéé zùm (chen bản đồ này)?</i>

<b>Turn left.</b>	
Sang trái.	<i>saang cháí</i>
<b>Turn right.</b>	
Sang phải.	<i>saang fai</i>
<b>at the corner</b>	
ở góc đường	<i>ờ góep đưhr-èrng</i>
<b>at the traffic lights</b>	
tại đèn giao tawm	<i>dại đèn zow thông</i>
<b>far</b>	
xa	<i>saa</i>
<b>near (to)</b>	
gần	<i>gùhn</i>



Also available from Lonely Planet:  
Southeast Asia and Mandarin Phrasebooks

# Glossary

For food and drink terms, see *Eat Your Words*, p94.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- C – Cambodia
- L – Laos
- T – Thailand
- V – Vietnam
- Y – Yunnan province (China)

**American War** (V) – Vietnamese name for what is also known as the ‘Vietnam War’  
**ao dai** (V) – traditional Vietnamese tunic and trousers  
**APEC** – Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation  
**apsara** (C) – heavenly nymphs or angelic dancers  
**Asean** – Association of Southeast Asian Nations  
**asura** (C) – demon

**bān** (T) – house, village; also written as ‘ban’  
**bāsīi** (L) – sometimes written as ‘basī’ or ‘baci’; a ceremony in which the 32 *khwān* are symbolically bound to the participant for health and safety  
**baht** (T) – the Thai unit of currency  
**báijiǔ** (Y) – literally ‘white alcohol’, a type of face-numbing rice wine  
**barang** (C) – foreigner  
**baray** (C) – ancient reservoir  
**BCEL** (L) – Banque pour le Commerce Extérieur Lao; in English, Lao Foreign Trade Bank  
**BE** (L, T) – Buddhist Era  
**boeng** (C) – lake  
**bówúguǎn** (Y) – museum  
**Brahman** – pertaining to Brahmanism, an ancient religious tradition in India and the predecessor of Hinduism; not to be confused with ‘Brahmin’, the priestly class in India’s caste system  
**BTS** (T) – Bangkok Transit System (Skytrain); Thai: *rót fai fáa*  
**bun** (L) – festival  
**buu dien** (V) – post office

**cánting** (Y) – restaurant  
**Cao Daism** (V) – Vietnamese religious sect  
**Cham** (C, V) – ethnic minority descended from the people of Champa, a Hindu kingdom dating from the 2nd century BC  
**chedi** (T) – see *stupa*  
**Chenla** (C, L, V) – Pre-Angkorian *Khmer* kingdom covering parts of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam

**chnnang** (C) – pot  
**Chunchiet** (C) – ethnolinguistic minority  
**CITS** (Y) – China International Travel Service; deals with foreign tourists in China  
**CPP** (C) – Cambodian People’s Party  
**cūn** (Y) – village  
**cyclo** (C, V) – pedicab

**deva** (C) – god  
**devaraja** (C) – god king  
**DMZ** (V) – the misnamed Demilitarised Zone, a strip of land that once separated North and South Vietnam  
**doi moi** (V) – economic restructuring or reform  
**dong** (V) – the Vietnamese unit of currency  
**duong** (V) – road, street; abbreviated as ‘Đ’

**Ecpat** – End Child Prostitution & Trafficking

**falang** (L) – Western, Westerner; foreigner  
**fānchuán** (Y) – pirate-sized junks with bamboo-battened canvas sails  
**faràng** (T) – Western, Westerner; foreigner  
**feng shui** – literally, ‘wind water’; used to describe geomancy  
**Funan** (C, V) – first *Khmer* kingdom, located in Mekong Delta area  
**Funcinpec** (C) – National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful & Cooperative Cambodia

**gōng** (Y) – temple  
**gōngyuán** (Y) – park  
**gopura** (C) – entrance pavilion in traditional Hindu architecture

**háang thién** (L) – candle rail  
**Han** (Y) – China’s main ethnic group  
**hāw wái** (L) – prayer hall  
**HCMC** (V) – Ho Chi Minh City  
**héua hang nyáo** (L) – long-tail boat  
**héua phai** (L) – rowboat  
**héua wái** (L) – speedboat  
**Hinayana** – literally, Lesser Vehicle; the school of Buddhism correctly known as *Theravada*  
**Ho Chi Minh Trail** (V) – route used by the North Vietnamese to move supplies to guerrillas in the South  
**Hoa** (V) – ethnic Chinese, the largest single minority group in Vietnam  
**Honda om** (V) – motorbike taxi  
**hú** (Y) – lake

**IDP** – International Driving Permit  
**Indochina** – Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, the French colony of Indochine; the name derives from Indian and Chinese influences  
**Isan** (T) – general term used for northeastern Thailand

**jataka** (C, L, T) – stories of the Buddha’s past lives, often enacted in dance-drama  
**jumbo** (L) – a motorised three-wheeled taxi, sometimes called a *túk-túk*

**karst** – limestone peaks with caves, underground streams and potholes  
**káthoey** (T) – transvestite, transsexual  
**khaen** (L) – panpipe  
**khao** (T) – hill, mountain  
**khlong** (T) – canal  
**Khmer** (C) – ethnic Cambodians; Cambodian language  
**Khmer Rouge** (C) – literally Red *Khmers*, the commonly used name for the Cambodian communist movement responsible for genocide in the 1970s  
**khwán** (L) – guardian spirits of the body  
**Kinh** (V) – the Vietnamese language  
**kíp** (L) – the Lao unit of currency  
**ko** (T) – island  
**koh** (C) – island  
**krama** (C) – chequered scarf  
**Kuomintang** (Y) – Nationalist Party, also known as KMT; the KMT controlled China between 1925 and 1949 until defeated by the communists

**lákhn** (C, T) – classical Thai dance-drama  
**lǎowài** (Y) – foreigners  
**liáng** (Y) – see *tael*  
**lí-keh** (T) – Thai folk dance-drama  
**linga** (C, L, T, V) – phallic symbol  
**luóhàn** (Y) – arhat or noble one

**māe chíi** (T) – Buddhist nun  
**mae nam** (L, T) – river  
**mah jong** (Y) – popular Chinese card game for four people, played with engraved tiles  
**Mahayana** – literally, Great Vehicle; a school of Buddhism that extended the early Buddhist teachings; see also *Theravada*  
**mát-mii** (T) – cloth made of tie-dyed silk or cotton thread; also written as ‘mat-mii’  
**meuang** (L, T) – city  
**MIA** (C, L, V) – missing in action, usually referring to US personnel  
**mondòp** (T) – small square, spired building in a *wat*  
**Montagnards** (V) – highlanders, mountain people; specifically the ethnic minorities inhabiting remote areas of Vietnam

**moto** (C) – motorcycle taxi  
**Mt Meru** – the mythical dwelling place of the Hindu gods, symbolised by the Himalayas  
**múan** (L) – fun, which the Lao believe should be present in all activities  
**muay thai** (T) – Thai boxing

**nāa** (T) – face  
**nāam** (L, T) – water, river  
**naga** (C, L, T) – mythical serpent-being  
**nákhn** (T) – city  
**nǎng** (T) – shadow play  
**nha-rong** (C, T, V) – Jarai communal house  
**NPA** (L) – National Protected Area  
**NTAL** (L) – Lao National Tourism Administration  
**NVA** (V) – North Vietnamese Army

**Pali** – ancient Indian language that, along with *Sanskrit*, is the root of *Khmer*, Lao and Thai  
**Pathet Lao** (L) – literally, ‘Country of Laos’; both a general term for the country and the common name for the Lao communist military during the civil war  
**PDA** (T) – Population & Community Development Association  
**Ph** (C) – abbreviation for *phlauh*  
**phansāa** (T) – Buddhist lent  
**phlauh** (C) – road, street; abbreviated as ‘Ph’  
**phleng phéua chíi-wít** (T) – songs for life, modern Thai folk songs  
**phnom** (C) – mountain  
**phu** (L) – hill or mountain  
**Pinyin** (Y) – the official system for transliterating Chinese script into Roman characters  
**ponglang** (T) – northeastern Thai marimba (percussion instrument) made of short logs  
**POW** – prisoner of war  
**praang** (C, T) – *Khmer*-style tower structure, found in temples; see also *stupa*  
**prasat** (C, T) – tower, temple  
**PRC** (Y) – People’s Republic of China  
**psar** (C) – market  
**PSB** (Y) – Public Security Bureau

**quan** (V) – urban district  
**quoc ngu** (V) – Vietnamese alphabet

**Ramakian** (T) – Thai version of the *Ramayana*  
**Ramayana** – Indian epic story of Rama’s battle with demons  
**Reamker** (C) – *Khmer* version of the *Ramayana*  
**remorque-moto** (C) – motorcycle-pulled trailer  
**riel** (C) – the Cambodian unit of currency  
**roi nuoc** (V) – water puppetry  
**rót fai fáa** (T) – Skytrain; *BTS*



**sāamláw** (T) – three-wheeled pedicab; also written as ‘samlor’

**sāiyasaat** (L) – folk magic, officially banned in Laos

**sampot** (C) – the national saronglike garment, usually worn at important occasions

**Sanskrit** – ancient Hindu language that, along with *Pali*, is the root of *Khmer*, Lao and Thai

**sànúk** (T) – fun

**sāwngthāew** (L, T) – small pick-up truck with two benches in the back; also written as ‘songthaew’

**shān** (Y) – mountain

**sim** (L) – chapel

**sima** (L) – ordination stones

**soi** (L, T) – lane, small street

**song** (L, V) – river

**Songkran** (T) – Thai New Year, held in mid-April

**SRV** (V) – Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Vietnam’s official name)

**stung** (C) – small river

**stupa** – religious monument, often containing Buddha relics

**tael** (Y) – unit of weight; one *tael* (*liàng*) equals 37.5g; used throughout the Mekong for weighing gold and precious stones

**talat** (L) – market

**Tam Giao** (V) – literally, ‘triple religion’; Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism fused over time with popular Chinese beliefs and ancient Vietnamese animism

**Tao** (V) – the Way; the essence of which all things are made

**TAT** (T) – Tourism Authority of Thailand

**tat** (L) – waterfall

**Tet** (V) – lunar New Year

**Th** (L, T) – abbreviation for *thàññ*

**thāat** (L) – Buddhist *stupa*, reliquary; also written as ‘that’

**thàññ** (L, T) – road, street, avenue; abbreviated as *Th*

**Theravada** – a school of Buddhism found in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand; this school confined itself to the early Buddhist teachings unlike *Mahayana*

**tonlé** (C) – major river

**tripitaka** (T) – Buddhist scriptures

**túk-túk** (L, T) – motorised *sāamláw*; written as ‘tuk-tuk’ in Cambodia

**tuóchá** (Y) – smoked green tea

**UNDP** – UN Development Programme

**UXO** (C, L) – unexploded ordnance

**VC** (V) – Viet Cong or Vietnamese Communists

**vihara** (C) – temple sanctuary

**vipassana** (L, T) – insight awareness meditation

**wāi** (L, T) – palms-together greeting

**wat** (C, L, T) – Buddhist temple-monastery

**wihāan** (T) – sanctuary, hall, dwelling

**xe om** (V) – see *Honda om*

**yuán** (Y) – the Chinese unit of currency

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