



CREATIVE  
TOURISM  
DISTRICT  
THAILAND  
*Nan*

*Handcraft*

*More Travel,  
More Fun,  
Lasting Friendships*

*Trip ↑*

## *Handcraft*

Handcrafts are born out of creativity, with attention to detail meticulously paid to every step of the process. This results in products being made full of pride, to pass on the admirable culture and lifestyle worthy of conservation so that they are not lost in the passage of time.

Pua town does not only boast of its eye-catching golden rice paddies, but also its old city, which was once dubbed 'The Glorious City,' has an origin that can be traced back to the era of Khun Fong, the Royal son of the glorious Phaya Phu Kha, who established a new settlement in this land. The prosperity and the homely and welcoming states of Pua still lasts to this day. Is it because of the beauty of the place that fills the locals with happiness and joy, so they can create such stunning handcrafts? They entice us to the point we have to track them down and become their disciples to try our hands on creating these handcrafts first hand. But, before we begin, since we are already at Pua, the priceless scenery at Phuket Temple just cannot be missed. From here, we can get a 270-angle aerial view of the components of the rice paddies, cows nibbling on the grass, fish leaping for their prey, and even small children jumping into the moats by the temple. We will pay respect to the Golden Buddha image to calm our heart, and then feed the fish after that. The fish here have a feeding habit that is out of the norm; the food isn't sprinkled into the water like it's usually done, but it's lowered down a long tube that connects to the pond below from the height of over 4-storey building. As the food granules slide onto the water surface, the fish school will swoop onto them as if it has been cued.



*"Wat Phuket"*



*"Breathtaking view at Wat Phuket"*





*"Tai Lue woven fabric community"*



*"Enjoy mushroom pizza at Ban Hua Nam mushroom farm"*

As you walk down to feed the fish, drop by the shops to purchase local souvenirs to your heart's content, and continue your way to the small passage beyond. You will find a traditional woven fabric shop owned by the Tai Lue Woven Fabric Group, led by Ms. Lom, a petite lady equipped with refreshing smiles that greet every guest who pays a visit. Ms. Lom will demonstrate and let us try the production process hands-on, beginning with dyeing the fabrics. Since the cotton used for the work must be the naturally gray 'tung' cotton only, she makes use of natural ingredients around her for the dyeing, including using different types of leaves, sappan seeds, and mud, so the colors achieved are not bright but rather gentle to the eyes. As

for the patterns, they are adapted and developed to more modern tastes and varieties from the fabrics she called 'makao,' which are old fabrics with Nan, Man and Tai Lue style patterns inherited from her ancestors.

As soon as you have laid eyes on these gorgeous fabrics, you won't be able to resist yourself from barging in to watch the production process and begging to try weaving the patterns with your own hands, as it has been a long yearned dream of mine. I can tell you that each row of pattern isn't something anyone can do with ease. Who says Thai woven fabric is overpriced? After you have tried weaving it yourself and you will realize the price of invaluable perseverance and expertise put into it. It's no wonder Ms. Lom told me that once she had woven a blanket as an offer to Princess Sirindhorn. The more you walk around, the more you can't help thinking that, for the people who seek to express their identities and difference through fashion, would it not be more unique to be the bearer of woven fabrics, each piece instilled with soul, handicraft, meticulousity, and creativity, and, most importantly, being handmade as a masterpiece to be adorned only by its sole wearer.

As it approaches lunchtime, your stomach will start to growl. We will leave today's lunch to the restaurant in the Ban Hua Nam Mushroom Farm Homestay, where you can enjoy their freshly made signature mushroom pizzas, amidst the scenery of the rice paddies and bamboo forest. After lunch, we will check in at Cocoa Valley Resort, a chic boutique hotel of Pua.

One of the objectives of travelling here is to experience the intense tastes and sweet aromas of the chocolate created from delicious cocoa beans, being the only place in Thailand with 100% real unprocessed cocoa for us to try, which is locally sourced from a private cocoa farm in Pua district.



*"Enjoy crafting cocoa handmade soaps"*



*"Your own handmade soap"*



Another main objective is to pin our accommodation at Cocoa Valley, where we can craft our own aromatic soaps from real cocoa butter base that is said to be expensive and the world's best oil. We chose to craft using the HP, or Hot Process, in which melting is done by using heat. The scent we select will be the real lavender essential oil, which is a little highly priced but has such an alluring aroma. Ms. Jiab, the female owner, will be our kind teacher who will guide us through every detail of the process. Starting from wrapping parchment paper around the molds, and then exercising our biceps by manually mixing the ingredients at first, but later with the help of an electronic device in homogenizing. The Hot Process requires it to be left overnight for at least 18 hours for the mixture to set, meaning it should be ready the next day. Other than that,

caustic soda will be added to the soap for the setting, which will later evaporate anyway, the rest of the ingredients used to craft the soaps are guaranteed to be 100% natural.

The bubbles from lathering is the result of coconut effervescence reaction of the coconut oil. Yet, the most impressive aspect of staying the night here is the feeling that you have at least indirectly supported the local community, as many of the foods and snacks served to the guests are the true tastes pitched in by residents of the neighborhood. My favorite would be the 'Nam Prik Noom' so fresh and delicious I would like to take it back home. Other practices include the cocoa bean separation technique innovated by the elderly by adapting from rice winnowing that has contributed to the chocolate crafting, and soap crafting classes and the selling of soaps crafted by the locals to earn extra income in addition to growing rice as they wait for the harvesting season. You will feel compelled to follow their examples when you listen Mr. Manoon and Ms. Jiab, the resort owners, relating these ideas.

In the morning, after we pack our belongings, and not forget to pick up our soaps, we will head to our next destination at Doi Silver Factory, where Ms. Koy will act as our welcoming host and tell us about the history of the ancient time. How the Mian people would adorn themselves with only real silver accessories to reflect their social face and status, according to their ideology of 'more is more' only. As soon as I saw their unique delicate and beautiful designs, as you have never seen anywhere before, I can tell you I so wanted to become a Mian woman. Can I buy the entire shop? But too bad as I have to pay heed to my account so I had to change my mind to ask Ms. Koy to let me volunteer as a silversmith. Ms. Koy taught me to make indentation of silver pieces, so I got to hold the hammer and aim at the targets, which required good hand-eye coordination. I really liked the activity as it was both fun and enjoyable, and I was proud of my work. Even though I miss a few hits unlike the professionals who could make everything hit on spot, but it's the experience and concentration training that are more valuable. After that, Ms. Koy will ask us to change into the full-fledged Yao attire, accompanied by accessories to take photos as a memento. Finally, it's time to say goodbye to Ms. Koy so we can proceed to Bo Suak, where we will visit Bo Suak pottery and porcelain center with a kiln aged over 700 years old, the era when this region still served as a supplier of quality pottery and porcelain works to many other regions. During that time, the technology was considered



*"Doi Silver Factory"*



*"Making indented patterns on silverworks"*

to be ahead of its time. Though this ancient kiln is registered as an archeological site by the Fine Arts Department, it is located in the private residence of Police Sergeant Manut and Mr. Sunan Tikham, who are kind enough to let us into their residence for viewing. And of course, because I'm a girl who's a craftswoman at heart, we will make our way to an elderly pottery expert's place, where she will teach us to craft pottery from Bo Suak clay. Forming it into the shape of a tiny cup is not an easy feat, you will still be proud even if your work is a little distorted. We have to thank the elderly for being calm with us. After the sculpting will be the painting step using laterite paint sourced from Chiang Mai, which is applied using a small piece of cardboard paper. It seems so easy when you watch her do it, but you will have to break a sweat when you try it yourself. In the end, no matter how you applied the paint, the outcome won't be evenly spread, but if you view it as an unconventional piece of art, it is quite pretty. When the activity at Bo Suak has concluded, now it's time to really bid farewell to Nan, yet fully packed with impressions, telling yourself there will definitely be a second visit.



### *Contacts for tourism:*

Tai Lue Woven Fabric, Ms. Lom – Tel: 081 180 2964

Cocoa Valley, Mr. Manoon – Tel: 097 186 6116

Doi Silver Factory, Ms. Koy – Tel: 081 568 2434

Bo Suak Pottery, Mr. Blue – Tel: 081 885 2307



### *Best time to travel:*

All year round, but if you are interested in training your skills and awakening your handcrafter spirit, you will have to make reservations 3 days in advance.

October for scenery of the yellow rice paddies.

Rainy season from August to September for refreshing green rice paddies.



### *Preparation*

Do research on the places you are visiting, without forgetting your camera and diary to record your memories.



*"Enjoy making pottery at your own design"*

### *Directions:*



From Nan city, take rural road no. 1080 for approximately 60 kilometers to Amphoe Pua, then drive back through Nan city toward Tambon Suak using road no. 101 and head toward road no. 1025 for approximately 11.5 kilometers.

### *Target audience:*



Travelers who are fascinated by delicate handcrafts and appreciate that each piece will be more valuable and meaningful if they study about the history and origins of the crafts, who like craftworks and handmade works, ready to try new experiences, and seeking after inspirations from traveling to be integrated into their own creativity.





## Values and impressions gained:

You will learn about the lifestyle and the daily life of the locality through creation of unique products and get to experience in depth with the creation of piece of work and take pride in the effort, concentration, and determination you put into crafting them by yourself. The main point is to understand how dedicating your life and soul into doing what you love can make you happy and fulfill the meaning of your life, in which it can be used as an inspiration to follow your own dreams.



## Activities with local communities:

- Dyeing and weaving fabrics with Ket Village cooperative
- Crafting handmade soaps at Cocoa Valley
- Making indented patterns on silverworks at Doi Silver Factory
- Making pottery at Bo Suak



## Souvenirs and must-haves:

- Tai Lue woven fabrics
- Handmade soaps
- Silver accessories
- Bo Suak pottery and porcelain works



"Handmade soaps"



"Making indented patterns on silverworks"



## Trivia:

Pua is an attractive green town surrounded by mountains, making its sceneries appealing and weather refreshing all year round. It's the center of precious culture as it's the melting pot of many races, including Tai Lue, Hmong, Mian, and Lua. Bo Suak has been the settlement of the Lua people since ancient times, with a holy salt well in the area, so called 'Bo Suak,' which is corrupted from a similar word that means 'salt.'



## Tourist attractions:

- Phuket Temple: (in caption) renowned scenic point of Pua town with many available activities, such as paying respect to the Buddha image, feeding fish, and 'dikdiam' trees.
- Bo Suak ancient kiln center: (in caption) archeological center registered by the Fine Arts Department facing toward the river because transportation of pottery was done via the river in the ancient times.

## Accommodation:



- Cocoa Valley Resort

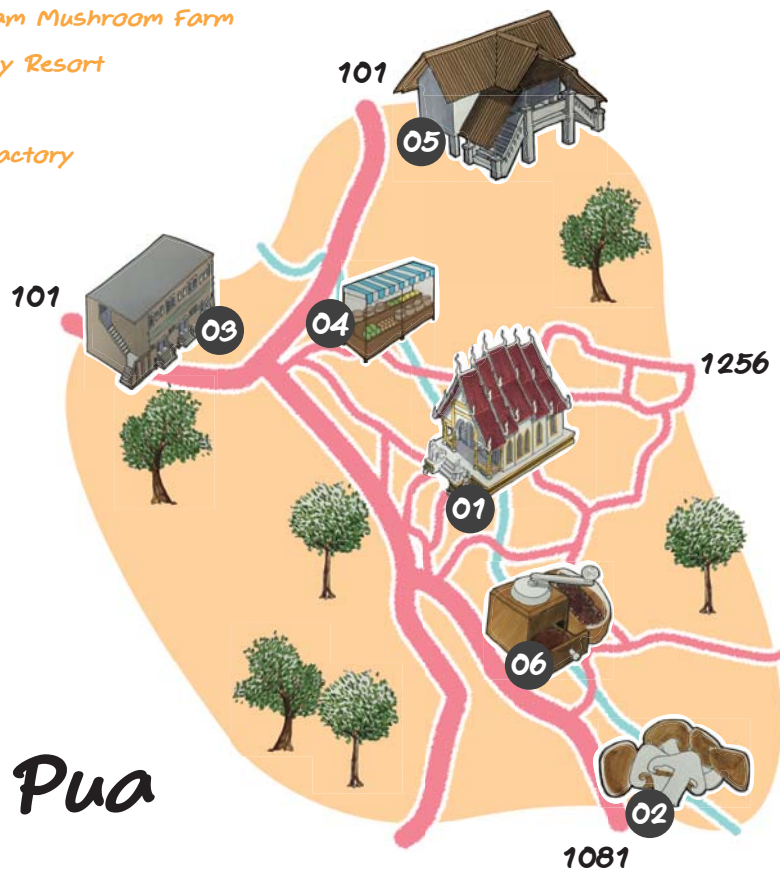


"Cocoa Valley Resort"

The morning program includes dropping by at Phuket Temple to pay respect to the Buddha image and view the scenery, then learning the Tai Lue arts of fabric dyeing and weaving firsthand at Ms. Lom Tai Lue woven fabric cooperative. Lunch will be mushroom pizzas at the well-known Ban Hua Nam Mushroom Farm. We will check in at Cocoa Valley Resort to make handmade soaps with real cocoa base, then to taste the intensity and richness of 100% cocoa. Our dinner will be the delicacies we find from strolling Pua market, before having a good night sleep.

Day 1

- 01 *Phuket Temple*
- 02 *Ban Hua Nam Mushroom Farm*
- 03 *Cocoa Valley Resort*
- 04 *Pua market*
- 05 *Doi Silver Factory*

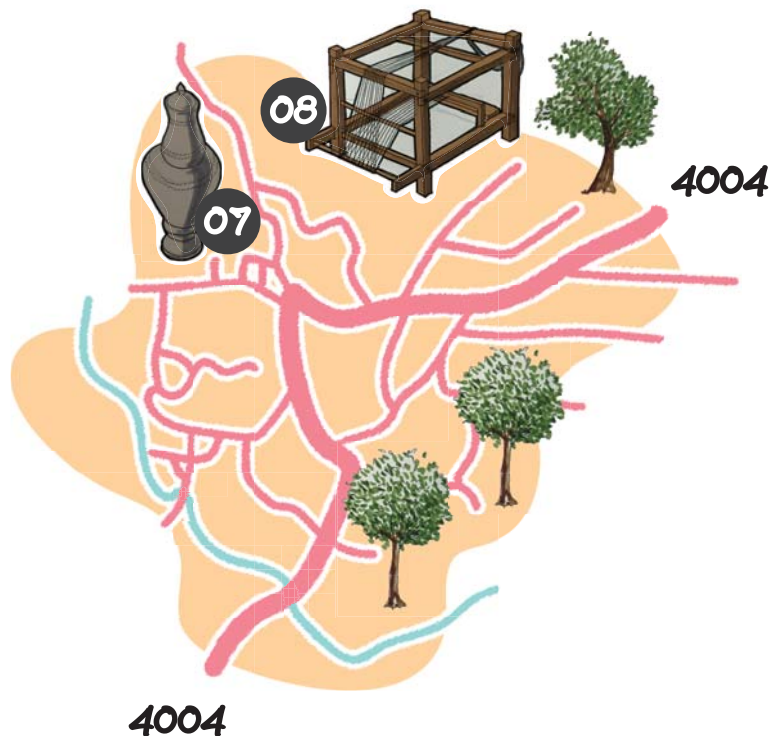


## Day 2

We check out from the hotel with handmade soaps as souvenirs, heading toward Doi Silver Factory to observe silver accessory production process and attempt making indented patterns by yourself. Then, we turn back for lunch in Nan city before continuing to Bo Suak to see the ancient kiln and try our hands on sculpting pottery works at the Bo Suak ancient kiln and porcelain center.

- 06 *Tai Lue Cafe*
- 07 *Bo Suak ancient kiln center*
- 08 *Sao Luang woven fabric community*

## Bo Suak





# Trip 2

More Travel, More Fun, Lasting Friendships

## Handcraft

We begin by getting to know Nan city in-depth at Nan Cultural Exhibition Hall, where inside tales conveying the identity of Nan in all dimensions are collected, including a theater that tells the history of Nan City and even the relations of Nan, as an important city of the Lan Na Kingdom, with Rattanakosin Kingdom and neighboring cities like Phrae, Phayao, and Chiang Rai, from the past to the present.

After learning the identity of Nan, we will have to dig into the culture and lifestyle of local community by pinning our next destination at Na Sao, a Tambon small yet with a strong cultural heritage inherited via the fabric of folk wisdom called the 'ta kong' fabric. Even though it has been forgotten for a period of time, but due its unique beauty, it has been revived once again by the expertise of old ladies and her community, who were so kind to teach us every little thing about woven fabric, from spinning cotton thread, tie-dye, and the weaving itself. I would really love to be able to weave the 'ta kong' or 'dok phikun' pattern like they do as well, but my skill is still nowhere close. Just moving the shuttle to pull the thread through the loom correct to the pattern already makes me proud of myself really bad. It gets more and more enjoyable after some time. If I have more time in the future, I should really consider burying myself here to more seriously learn the craft. I got to meet Ms. Wassana, a kind local guide who is originally from Khon Kaen but moved here to fully become a Na Sao in-law, who provided me with thorough knowledge without sparing any details. She told me that ta kong fabric is considered to be fabric of high status that was traditionally used in ceremonies and by aristocrats, so it is not commonly used for general purposes like 'khao ma' fabric, but rather used as tablecloths, bedcovers, blankets, pillowcases, or shawls only. I'm warning you here so it's not used for a wrong purpose. The dyes used for the fabric are completely natural, guaranteed not to cause any rashes. The red comes from 'makha' wood, the green comes from bitter bush, and the gray comes from mud. Every color and pattern are of natural beauty, and now the community has started growing cotton for personal uses, which chemical-free in every step.



"Ta kong fabric"



"Ban Na Sao"



"Nan cultural exhibition hall"



*"Weaving requiring expertise, concentration and cool composure."*

Still intrigued by the weaving of Na Sao's ta kong fabric, we continue to 'Sao Luang' fabric that is also as delicate and marvelously patterned. This time we will start our in-depth study from spinning the cotton which is done by spinning it around a wooden tube small enough to fit into the shuttle, followed by the warping, which is the claspings of the spun cotton onto the heddles, and then setting it onto the loom by tying each pair of thread one by one. After I heard this, I had to say it is just painstaking, while the weaver ladies smiled and said it's a walk in the park with no problems at all, but I had to give up. The final step is the weaving, in which I already had a bit of experience, so I was very determined to shuttle every last thread back and forth until the edge is reached. I managed to do many rows so I was very happy, and I realized that weaving is no easy feat, requiring expertise, concentration, and cool composure. Finishing each row is just no simple. I have to surrender to these local sages who invented and passed on these cultures.

The pattern that earns Sao Luang fabric such a reputation is the one adapted from the pattern of pottery works discovered in the Bo Suak area is even more painstakingly difficult. After a firsthand experience, the only thing you can say is that price of each piece is more than worth it. Other than leaving my heart to the Sao Luang Village, I will have to leave my appetite as well. The foods just look so delicious, made from toxin-free fresh ingredients locally sourced from within the community. Simple dishes like banana flower salad still make me wonder why the banana flower is both so fresh and juicy unlike those found in Bangkok, that I had to reevaluate my view that banana flower is bland and dry as I had always believed.

Seeing the quaint pattern of the Sao Luang fabric seriously piqued my interest in Bo Suak pottery, that it made me stopped by the Bo Suak kiln and porcelain center. Before all else, I will have to mention the high quality clay in the river of Bo Suak area has been widely used to sculpt pottery since ancient times, around 2017 to 2107 Buddhist Era, not Christian Era. The technology and porcelain production processes are considered not to be second to none. The fact that pottery was in widespread use, which is well evinced by the kilns and the pots and jars uncovered in the area. The ancient kiln is located in a private residence, but the owners are generous enough to let the general public to visit and learn, and if you would like to have a pottery cup or vase made with your own hands and creativity, the ladies at the Bo Suak pottery cooperative are more than happy and willing to take on the teacher role with patient. These ladies would sculpt the 'inthanu' and owl patterns, auspicious patterns believed to safeguard the owners from any dangers, but for a complete beginner sculptor like me, just shaping the piece up without any distortions already bring me rejoice. After sculpting, old ladies would demonstrate us the painting method, in which you have to dip a piece of cardboard paper into the paint and gently apply it only the cup of bowl previously sculpted. The laterite color is sourced from Chiang Mai, since it cannot be found locally. Lastly, it's waiting time, since the kiln gigantic, so a many pieces have to be baked together at the same time, and they will post our finished products to the address provided.



*"Bo Suak ancient kiln center"*



"Wat Phra That Khao Noi"

After we say goodbye to the old ladies at Bo Suak, we'd better head to the city. The first place we will visit is Phra That Khao Noi Temple as it has a scenic spot where you can get a distant view of Nan city, especially in the evening with such perfect lighting you just have to keep clicking photos to max out your memory card. Fill your lungs with the clean air, sit down, lay your eyes upon the horizon and contemplate the activities you have done today and take pride in yourself that even though your skills may not be able to match others, but you still fought on with effort and determination. Keep these impressions into your memory, and bring yourself to check in at Wiang Kaew Hotel, a charming Lan Na style accommodation, loved by those like me who like to indulge in the atmosphere of the olden days and spectacular architectures.

Get a good night sleep to your heart's content and overload yourself with energy and liveliness to continue exploring Nan city. The first activity of the day will be crafting 'tung kha khing' at Phra Koed Temple. It wouldn't be strange if you wonder what 'tung kha khing' is, but don't worry as I will explain. 'Tung' means a flag; 'kha' means height; and 'khing' means self. Crafting a tung kha khing essentially means making a Lan Na style flag as long as the height of the maker. The objective is to extend one's expectancy, rid one of misfortunes, and brush away bad lucks. The frame of the tung will have already been prepared for, and we only have to decorate the face ourselves. The fun here is that you get to employ your creativity and a little bit of art skills to make a one-of-its-kind tung kha khing in the world with your own hands. In fact, I don't know whether it's going to change my fortune or not, but the generosity and attention the elderly had given let me take true serenity and joy back home. Tung making will be followed by carving wooden Buddha image at Maha Pho Temple. At first I was a bit worried whether carving a Buddha image was going too much of a feat, but actually Phra Palad Mongkol, the abbot, had already made the rough outline



"Making tung kha khing"

for. All we will have to do was using the wooden hammer to pound and puncture, then slice and dig with a chisel until you get the complete face. Do not worry about making mistakes since the abbot will be guiding us through every step, while explaining and telling us tidbits in details, including the history, the tools, knowledge about the proportions of Buddha sculptures, even widely used auspicious woods, such as sandalwood, teakwood, and jackfruit wood. When all is done, we will get to offer the handmade Buddha image to the temple, which is delightful beyond words. According to Lan Na wisdom, offering a carved wooden Buddha image is equal to a good karma comparable by nothing else.



"Carving wooden Buddha image"

We then stop by Surat Thani's beef noodle restaurant that turned into Nan's specialty. Now we will be but full and content. In the afternoon, we will still roam around the temples, because temples are located not far apart from one another within Nan city. Doubtlessly, the title of the most famous temple has to be given to Phu Min Temple that other than the ubosot and the Buddha image that we could pay respect to, everyone will have to admire the painting of the 'Pu Man Ya Man' with the reputed 'Love Whisper.' Crossing the street will get you to the Nan National Museum to appreciate archeological artefacts, with the highlight being the black ivory that weighs up to 48-kilogram. We end our trip with taking photos at the popular plumeria arch at the museum's front path. Don't tell anyone that you have been to Nan until you go there.





## Contacts for tourism:

Na Sao, Ms. Wassana – Tel 089 829 9659  
 Sao Luang, Ms. Wallapha – Tel 088 454 1005  
 Bo Suak, Mr. Blue – Tel: 081 885 2307  
 Tung Kha Khing, Ms. Tim – Tel: 087 178 2588  
 Wooden Buddha image carving,  
 Phra Palad Mongkol – Tel: 084 609 1577  
 Wooden Buddha image carving,  
 Mae Taew (Wat Mahapo) – Tel: 084 609 1577



## Best time to travel:

All year round



## Preparation:

Do research on the places you are visiting, without forgetting your camera and diary to record your memories.



## Values and impressions gained:

You will learn about the lifestyle and the daily life of the locality through creation of unique products and get to experience in depth with the creation of piece of work and take pride in the effort, concentration, and determination you put into crafting them by yourself. The main point is to understand how dedicating your life and soul into doing what you love can make you happy and fulfill the meaning of your life, in which it can be used as an inspiration to follow your own dreams.

## Directions:



From Amphoe Mueang, take the road straight to Na Sao for 14.6 kilometers and only 3.8 kilometers from Na Sao to Bo Suak.

## Target audience:



Travelers who are fascinated by delicate handcrafts and appreciate that each piece will be more valuable and meaningful if they study about the history and origins of the crafts, who like craftworks and handmade works, ready to try new experiences, and seeking after inspirations from traveling to be integrated into their own creativity.

## Trivia:



Na Sao is surrounded by mountains with 43% of the total area being flat plain with many brooks flowing through the region. The weather is very hot during summer and very cold during winter. Bo Suak has long been a large settlement of the Lua people since ancient times. There is a holy salt well in the area, so called 'Bo Suak,' which corrupted from a similar word that means 'salt.'



"Learning traditional weaving at Sao Luang"



## Activities with local communities:

- Weaving ta kong fabrics
- Weaving Sao Luang fabrics
- Sculpting Bo Suak pottery
- Making tung kha khing at Phra Koed Temple
- Carving wooden Buddha image at Maha Pho Temple



## Tourist attractions:

- Nan Cultural Exhibition Hall: learning center for the history, culture, nature, and geography of Nan and other Lan Na provinces in the north from the past to the present in a modern setting.
- Bo Suak ancient kiln center: archeological center registered by the Fine Arts Department facing toward the river because transportation of pottery was done via the river in the ancient times.
- Phu Min Temple: Nan's famous temple whose highlight is the painting of the 'Pu Man Ya Man' with the reputed 'Love Whisper,' a work of the artist Nan Bua Phan who has created many artworks that can be admired at Phu Min Temple and Rim Nan Gallery
- Nan National Museum: A spectacular architecture that was originally a 'ho kham' or the residence of prince in the ancient time. Now it is used as an exhibition for archeological artefacts from many fields with the sacred black ivory as the must-see.



## Souvenirs and must-haves:

- Ta kong fabric
- Sao Luang fabric
- Bo Suak pottery



"Carving wooden Buddha image"



"making pottery"



"Nan cultural exhibition hall"



## Accommodation:

- Wiang Kaew Hotel

# Day 1

Our trip opens at Nan Cultural Exhibition Hall, then proceeds to Na Sao to learn about ta kong fabrics. At noon, we will have lunch with Sao Luang local community, then go on to learn about spinning cotton, tie-dye, and weaving Sao Luang fabric, where you will get to admire the work of your efforts. Then, we will make pottery and see the ancient kiln at Bo Suak pottery and porcelain center. At Phra That Noi Temple, we will head to the scenic spot where you can get an aerial view of the evening sun, before checking at Wiang Kaew Hotel.

- 01 Nan Cultural Exhibition Hall
- 02 Sao Luang woven fabric community
- 03 Bo Suak ancient kiln center
- 04 Phra That Noi Temple
- 05 Wiang Kaew Hotel



Nai Wiang

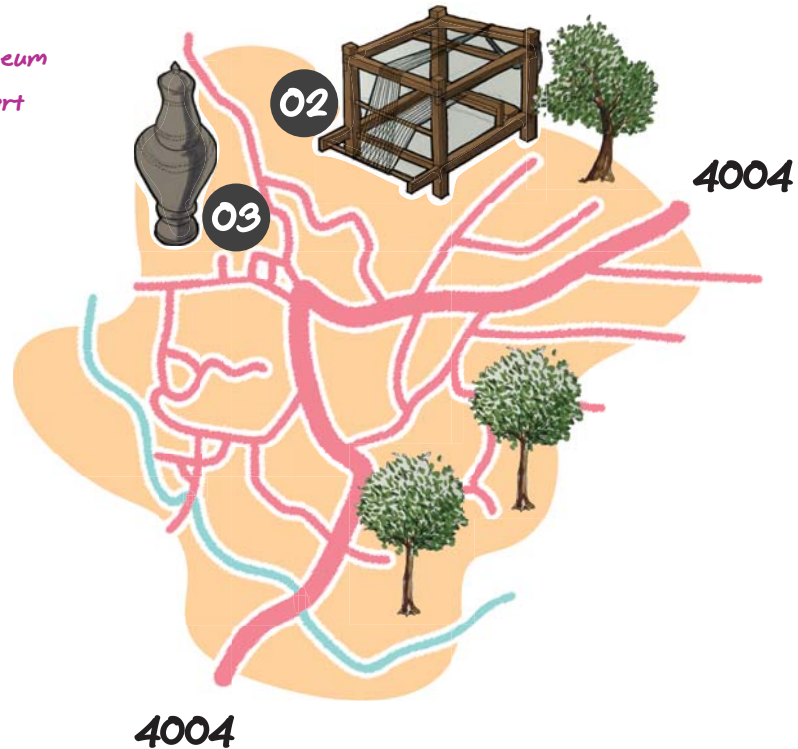


In the early morning, we will head to Phra Koed Temple to make tung kha khing, followed by becoming disciples to the abbot of Phra Maha Pho Temple where he will teach us to carve wooden Buddha image in the Lan Na style. Once we are hungry, we will have Surat Thani beef noodle, a city specialty. The afternoon program will include admiring the renowned artwork by the artist Nan Bua Phan, the 'Pu Man Ya Man' with the reputed 'Love Whisper' at Phu Min Temple. Afterward, we will walk across to Nan National Museum to look at Nan's archeological artefacts, then we will take couple photos with the plumeria arch, and we will take it easy and end our trip by sipping coffees and appreciating the row of temples surrounding Nan city square.

Day 2

- 06 Phra Koed Temple
- 07 Phra Maha Pho Temple
- 08 Phumin Temple
- 09 Nan National Museum
- 10 Nan Nakhon Airport

## Bo Suak





CREATIVE  
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Tourist Hotline  
**1672**  
เบอร์เดียวเที่ยวทั่วไทย  
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*Nan*

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