

# AN ELEPHANT PRESERVATION PROJECT THROUGH RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN PAKBENG - LAOS



MEKONGELEPHANTPARK.COM

# The People



THE HEART OF THE PROJECT



## ITS ORIGIN AND TEAM

- The Mekong Elephant Park first opened its doors in 2008. It was renamed in 2017 with a new mission:

*To protect, at all costs, the natural environment necessary for the survival of the elephants, as well as the elephants themselves.*

- Managed by Wendy Leggat, it is now a multicultural team, 95% of whom are Laotians of different ethnicities, motivated and committed to this cause.



# ITS RESIDENTS

- The sanctuary is now lucky enough to be able to offer a real elephant's life in a natural environment to 6 elephants (4 females and 2 males).



Dokeo,  
Born 1992



Mae Nat,  
Born 1980



Mae Nin,  
Born 1992



Half Sisters



Kham Khoun,  
Born 1988



Mae Ping,  
Born 1997



Niece



Mae Kham,  
Born 1954



# THE CARETAKERS - THE MAHOUTS

## MR. PAN - CHIEF MAHOUT

*Mahout of Kham Khoun*

From Ban Thong | Born 1980



Pan is our most knowledgeable and experienced mahout. Coming from a long family line of elephant owners, he has worked with elephants since his teenage years. Today, he is the main mahout of Kham Khoun, a strong and territorial male that requires skill, firmness, and trust. Pan's leadership and professionalism make him a respected mentor to the rest of the mahout team. He is also responsible for passing on traditional know-how to the next generation.



# THE CARETAKERS - THE MAHOUTS

## MR. LIT

*Mahout of Kham Khoun*

From Ban Thong | Born 1976



Lit grew up in Ban Thong, a traditional mahout village, and developed a love for elephants from a young age. He is the second mahout of Kham Khoun and also steps in for other elephants when their main mahout is absent. Alongside Mr. Pan, he is one of the few who can safely work with our dominant male. Lit also knows the forest like the back of his hand - ask him anything about it.



# THE CARETAKERS - THE MAHOUTS

## MR. NOYIN

*Mahout of Dokeo*

From Ban Beemee | Born 1965



Noyin is our most senior mahout. Born into a Lao Leu family who lived and worked with five elephants, he has been surrounded by elephants since childhood. Today, he is entrusted with the care of Dokeo, our recently rescued male. Handling a bull elephant requires deep experience especially during musth periods and Noyin's wisdom and strong values make him the perfect guardian for Dokeo.

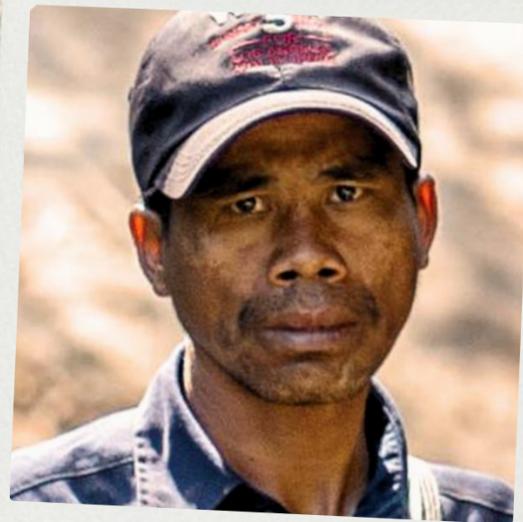


## THE CARETAKERS - THE MAHOUTS

### MR. VEE

#### *Mahout of Mae Kham*

From Na Nong Kham  
(Hongsa District) | Born 1984



Vee joined the park when Mae Kham's former mahout retired. Although he doesn't come from a mahout family, his gentle and composed nature quickly made him a natural fit. Mae Kham, our oldest elephant, needs a calm and attentive presence especially during her moments of fatigue. Vee is learning to understand her personality and routines while building a strong and trusting bond. His quiet dedication and care are appreciated by both the team and Mae Kham herself.



# THE CARETAKERS - THE MAHOUTS

## MR. KONG

*Mahout of Mae Ping*

From Ban Beemee | Born 1985



Kong comes from Ban Beemee, a village in northern Laos where every family once had elephants. As a member of the Lao Leu ethnic group - known for their deep elephant knowledge - he grew up with elephants and learned to understand them from a young age. Today, he cares for Mae Ping, our youngest and most spirited female. His calm experience makes him the ideal match for her strong and rebellious nature.



# THE CARETAKERS - THE MAHOUTS

## MR. SEUNG

*Mahout of Mae Nat*

From Mok Kan | Born 1998



Mr. Seung is the youngest mahout on our team. With no prior experience around elephants, he learns every day by observing the animals and working closely with his fellow mahouts. His calm, quiet personality is a perfect match for Mae Nat, who shares the same gentle energy. Always smiling when in the company of elephants, Seung is a great example of our mission to inspire new generations of Laotians to take part in ethical elephant care.



# THE CARETAKERS - THE MAHOUTS

## MR. CHAI

*Mahout of Mae Nin*

From Ban Houey Kha | Born 1992



Chai comes from Ban Houey Kha, a small Kamu village located five hours' walk from Pakbeng. He previously lived and worked with elephants, but when the elephant he cared for passed away, he stepped away from the profession. Ten years later, Chai felt ready to return and when Mae Nin joined the park, he naturally accepted to become her mahout. Both are young, energetic, and love food - a lively and joyful pairing that continues to grow in trust and harmony.



# The Place



THE SETTING WHERE  
ALL TAKES PLACE



## WHERE

- Halfway between Luang Prabang and Huay Xai/Chiang Khong (the main border crossing into northern Laos), the Mekong Elephant Park sits on the banks of the Mekong, opposite the village of Pakbeng and is a one day boat ride from both places.
- You need to cross the mighty Mekong in order to join the 40 hectares of primary forest and discover our elephants in spectacular natural surroundings.



# SITE INFORMATION (MAP)



“ We don't just protect elephants, but also all the other animal species present in our 80-hectare protected area, which we hope to expand in the future. ”

## FACILITIES - THE SHOP

- **OUR CRAFTSMEN**

Within the park, we sell local northern Lao products made here by our craftsmen: **Mr Kam** the blacksmith, **Ms Mee** the weaver, and **Mr Mong** the bamboo specialist. All their handicrafts are unique, handmade and each article tells a story.



*Souvenirs with impact*



# FACILITIES - BAR & RESTAURANT

| OPEN FROM 9.30AM TO 4PM |

As part of our commitment to sustainability, we are continually working on initiatives that help to preserve the local environment and promote products from the land to the plate. Our set menus and à la carte menu offer authentic dishes in the restaurant's shaded area, in the heart of the park.



*Dining with purpose*





# The Purpose



THE MISSION THAT  
DRIVES US



# CONTEXT AND URGENCY

## FIGHTING THE THREAT OF EXTINCTION OF THE ELEPHANTS IN LAOS

- In recent years in Asia, the numbers and conditions of elephants have worsened in a most alarming way. In Laos, the land of a million elephants, there are **less than 800 elephants remaining** (half in the wild and half captive).
- Faced with the looming risk of extinction, **reproduction must become a priority** in order to bring about a new generation of Asian elephants in Laos. There is approximately **one elephant born for every 10 that die.**



# OUR APPROACH

- Conceived as a **pilot project for the ecotourism industry**, the Mekong Elephant Park demonstrates our aim **to promote sustainable tourism and support an endangered species**.



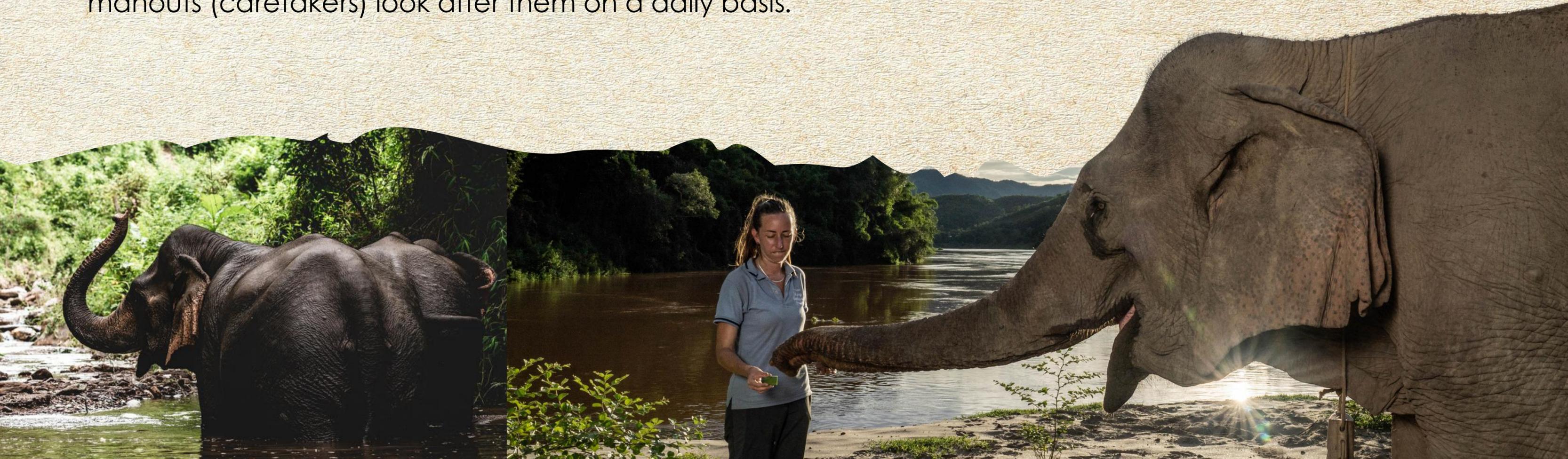
**Accredited GOLD AWARD**  
**for elephant welfare**

- **This project combines:**
  - An environmental purpose: preserving a threatened species.
  - An economic and social ambition: suggesting alternatives for the mahouts and their families.
  - A touristic aim conceived and planned in order to respect the two aspects above.

# **OUR AIM** | PRESERVATION THROUGH TOURISM |

## *Elephant rescue: new opportunities for elephants and mahouts*

Our aim, through our sustainable tourism policy, is to give a new life to elephants that have been exploited by the logging industry or mass tourism by buying them back. This has been made possible thanks to the help provided by all our visitors and partners who support our project. Our 6 professional mahouts (caretakers) look after them on a daily basis.



# 🐾 The last elephant rescue 🐾 took place in March 2025

## [ DOKEO ]

- Born in northern Laos, Dokeo endured years of hard labor. After a decade spent hauling timber in the logging industry, he was sold to work in the tourism industry in Luang Prabang. There, he spent four long years carrying tourists, deprived of the forest, adequate food, and any social interaction. Living under harsh conditions, he arrived severely emaciated, with foot infections and injuries, and mentally fragile.
- Today, Dokeo is already showing signs of a positive transformation: he has already regained 400 kilos and is finally enjoying a natural, soothing environment.



# OUR VALUES | PRESERVATION THROUGH TOURISM |

“ The Mekong Elephant Park allows our mahouts to gain a decent wage and assures them and their elephants security and good living conditions in a sustainable environment. ”



- A high-quality natural environment for the elephants, within a primary forest that allows them to feed naturally.
- A park on a human scale that promotes the preservation of our pachyderms through a clear and responsible eco-tourism policy.
- A sustainable opportunity for mahouts and other team members to earn a regular income to stay out of the logging industry business.
- A parc that offers a new life (a real elephant life) thanks to rescue projects.
- Tourism based on passive observation of elephants (where they are free to choose whether or not they wish to interact) in order to reduce stress on the elephants and their mahouts.
- Raising traveler's awareness of elephant conservation and the environment in which they live in, through a variety of educational means.

# From Support to Impact



WHAT YOUR SUPPORT  
MAKES POSSIBLE



# WHY SUPPORT US | OUR PARTNERS |

***There are currently no government subsidies.***

All travellers' visits and donations to the sanctuary contribute and participate mainly towards:

Vitamins & medicines

Veterinary care

Food purchases

Site maintenance & equipment

Team salaries

Protection & enlargement of the reserve



# WHY SUPPORT US | OUR PARTNERS |



The French NGO **APEEL** (Association pour la protection de l'écosystème des éléphants du Laos) supports the Mekong Elephant Park project and receives donations directly in France. Donations are eligible for a 66% tax reduction in France.

*If you want to get your company and profession more involved, don't hesitate to include us in your corporate philanthropy, sponsorship and fund-raising events, or include us as a project in your foundation.*

# WHY SUPPORT US | OUR PARTNERS |

## THANKS TO YOU

- The income generated by visitors enables us to provide the elephants with the care, infrastructure and natural environment best suited to their needs.
- Combat the extinction of elephants by participating to essential breeding programmes to prevent their extinction in Laos.
- Prevent a rural exodus and create jobs in remote areas.
- Support local agriculture by guaranteeing regular orders of seasonal fruit and vegetables.



# Visitor Experiences

.....  
**WHERE TOURISM  
MEETS CONSERVATION**



# HALF DAY EXPERIENCE | A SPECIAL MOMENT WITH OUR PACHYDERMS |

From 9.00am to 1.00pm | **Free boat transfers** from Sanctuary Pakbeng Lodge | All tours are with a private guide

EPH01

Packages for FIT  
(join-in basis) – Max 12 pax

## Elephant Wonders

- In-depth presentation of the elephants
- Elephant encounter in the forest
- Walk by the elephant's side
- Observation of the Elephant Bath and/or their Snack time
- Lunch (full menu) at the restaurant of the park



# FULL DAY EXPERIENCE | A SPECIAL MOMENT WITH OUR PACHYDERMS |

From 9.00am to 1.00pm | **Free boat transfers** from Sanctuary Pakbeng Lodge | All tours are with a private guide

 Packages for FIT  
(join-in basis)

## Elephant Herd Day Tour

### MORNING:

- In-depth presentation of the elephants
- Elephant encounter in the forest
- Walk by the elephant's side
- Observation of the Elephant Bath and/or their Snack time
- Lunch (full Menu) at the Park's restaurant

### AFTERNOON:

- Activity of the day
- Observing traditional craft workshops: bamboo weaving, loom weaving, blacksmith
- Elephant check-up
- Mekong Elephant Bath



 **2D / 1N EXPERIENCE** | AN IMMERSIVE NIGHT IN THE HEART OF THE JUNGLE |

**EPHJUN** *Elephant Jungle Package*

**DAY 1**

*Welcome and 1st introduction to the sanctuary preservation project*

**16:30:** Transfer by boat to the Mekong Elephant Park. Installation in your bungalow

**17.30:** Introduction and snack to the matriarch Mae Kham

**19:00:** Dinner at the restaurant and overnight stay.

**DAY 2**

**07.30:** Morning good wishes to Mae Kham

**08.00:** Breakfast at the restaurant

**09:00:** Departure for a full day at the park

**12h00:** Lunch at the park's restaurant

**From 14:00:** Activities of the day on site

**(based on EPH01)**

**17.30:** Time for Mae Kham's snack

**19:00:** Dinner at the restaurant and overnight stay



 **2D / 1N EXPERIENCE** | AN IMMERSIVE NIGHT IN THE HEART OF THE JUNGLE |

**EPHJUN** ] Elephant Jungle Package

**DAY 3**

**07.00:** Breakfast at the restaurant

**08.00:** Farewell to the elephants and transfer by boat to Pakbeng

*Tip: An extra night in a luxury eco-lodge with all comforts at the Sanctuary Pakbeng Lodge before or after the programme.*

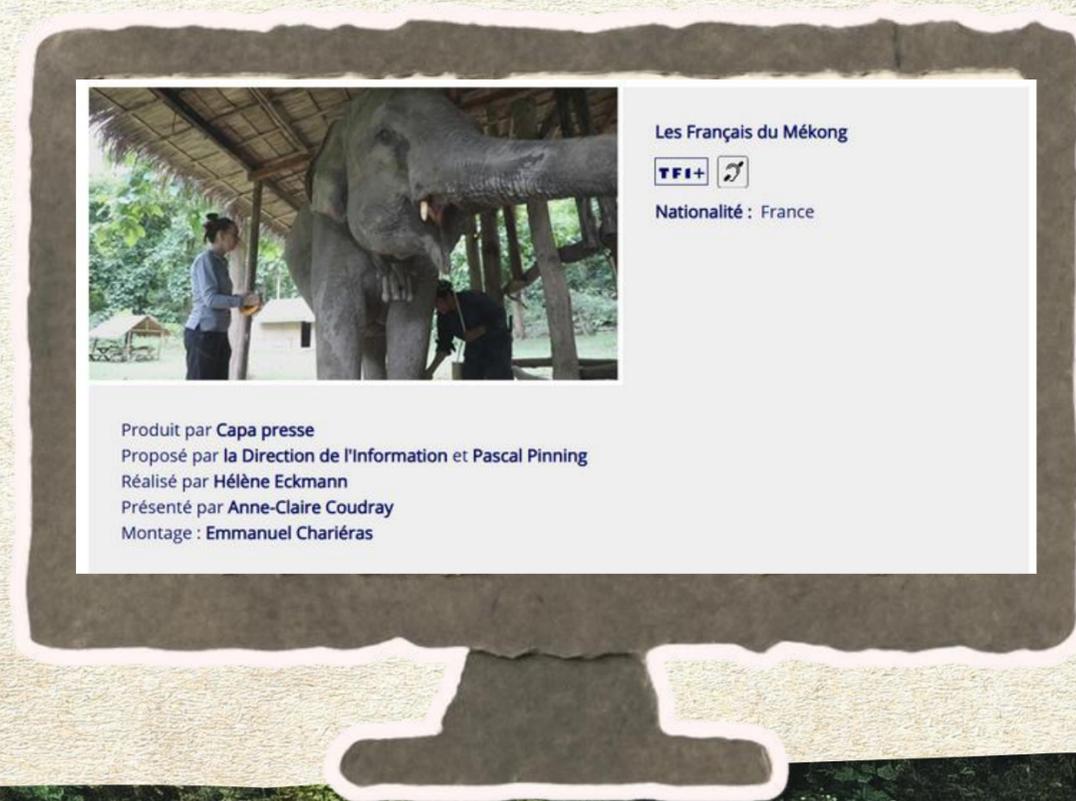


What    
people say

• • • • •  
AND WHERE TO FIND US  
IN THE MEDIA

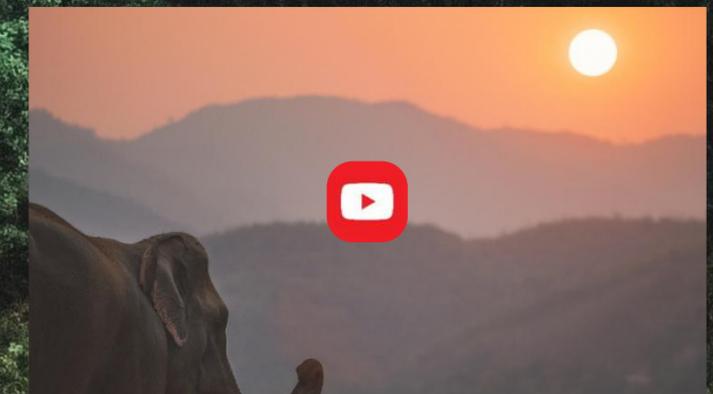


# TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROJECT...



TF1 (French Prime TV Channel)  
**Les Français du Mekong**  
*4 million views*

Or click below to see us on Youtube



# MEKONG ELEPHANT PARK MENTIONED



MEKONG  
ELEPHANT PARK



## 10 of the best places to visit in Laos

 Dave Stamboulis  
Sep 16, 2025 • 13 min read

[Lonely Planet](#)



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## Sailing past elephants on the banks of the Mekong River is just the start of a jumbo adventure in Laos

[Daily Mail](#)

 / Voyages

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 Réservé aux abonnés

## Du Marineland au safari : voyager pour voir des animaux, oui mais à quel prix ?

Par Claire Rodineau  
Le 5 février 2025 à 11h11

[Le Figaro \(French only\)](#)

# TESTIMONIES



5,0  
★★★★★  
222 reviews



**Mekong Elephant Park** •

4.8 ●●●●● (173 reviews) #1 of 6 things to do in Pak Beng

 **valentina papagni**  
Local Guide · 362 reviews · 318 photos

★★★★★ 8 months ago

It's hard to put into words how incredible this experience was and how beautiful the place is because it's truly unique. There are few things in the world that can move you this much. Everything was simply amazing.

We stayed for two nights in a bungalow inside the park. The staff is fantastic, the food is excellent, and the activities to learn about the elephants are wonderful. You can observe them, of course, without disturbing them. I really want to thank Wendy because she's such a wonderful person. This was an unforgettable experience.

The place is so beautiful, and it's hard to describe because there are so many emotions involved. We started our journey from Luang Prabang with the slow boat. Wendy picked us up at Pak Beng, and we crossed the Mekong River by boat. We arrived at the sanctuary, a large area where the elephants are cared for. There is a section with four bungalows where you eat and relax.

You're truly immersed in nature, and the people are incredibly kind. We had such a great time. The park is amazing, and the world needs more people like this.

 **Manon Uberty**  
Local Guide · 87 reviews · 5 photos

★★★★★ 11 months ago

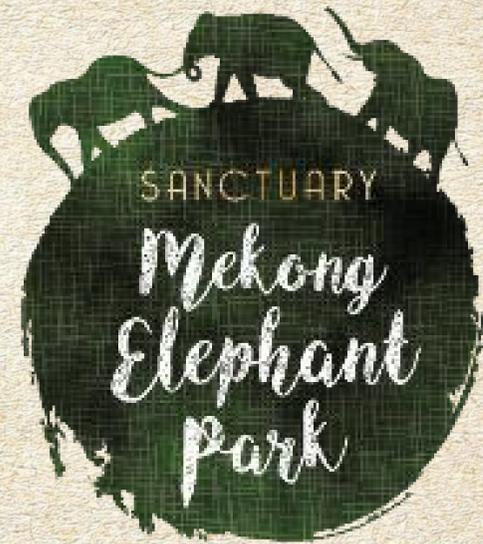
What a wonderful experience! If you love animals, you must definitively go there. The project of Wendy is completely focused on the well being of the elephants as well as their employees. She created a fantastic place which deserves to be known all over the world. Congrats to her. It's amazing.

 **Hannah Gold**  
Local Guide · 17 reviews · 21 photos

★★★★★ a year ago

We were taking the 2 day slow boat from Huay Xai to Luang Prabang and came across this sanctuary when stopping for the night at Pak Beng. We decided to do the 1 day tour package & had a wonderful, unforgettable day learning and witnessing the elephants in their natural habitat - we are very glad we decided to stay the extra night and delay the boat to the next day. Wendy and her team were amazing & it was inspiring to hear how she had built this sanctuary to both help protect the Laos Asian elephant population and to rebuild the jungle's ecosystem. It is clear that sustainability and the elephant's welfare are at the core of what they do - the team's passion and commitment to the cause really shone through throughout the day! The lunch provided was also delicious in a beautiful setting in the bamboo hut!





**Our B2B Pro Tools**  
Via the Agent Hub online solution



[MEKONGELEPHANTPARK.COM](http://MEKONGELEPHANTPARK.COM)