



แม่ฮ่องสอน
DoiSter
**Craft
Stay**



DoiSter
แม่ฮ่องสอน

Travel, learn, and enjoy long stay trips
Experience the handicraft scenes in the Land of Three Mists
Mae Hong Son DoiSter CraftStay



DoiSter CraftStay

The word 'craft' means 'an activity involving skill in making things by hand'. It takes time to create handmade products, therefore 'craft', in other words, means 'doing things slowly'. 'CraftStay' then refers to travelling to explore arts and culture, getting hands-on experience in learning to create the handicrafts from the local artisans, and taking the time to do and learn things and appreciate the beauty that surrounds us. "The longer you stay, the deeper your feelings grow".

DoiSter CraftStay invites you to travel and make friends with 'Chao Doi' or the highlanders of various ethnic groups. Spend time exchanging cultures and learning about each other through handicrafts and way of life, and stay a bit longer to gain a better understanding of each other and to strengthen relationships between you and the local people.



DoiSter CraftStay in Mae Hong Son

Living in a remote valley makes transportation difficult in the past, whether it was going to the city centre of Mae Hong Son or going to nearby cities like Chiang Mai, therefore the highlanders had to create things to use in their daily life. The men would produce tool; such as, basket and knife, while the women would make clothing. Even though each family cannot make everything by themselves, they were able to help each other and exchange things so everyone have all the basic necessities of life. Mae Hong Son is hence full of amazing handicrafts of various ethnic groups that not only are produced for their own use, but also generate income for the family.

You are invited to come and spend time living and learning the way of life and the arts and crafts of the various ethnic groups in the tourism villages that are the members of the Mae Hong Son Community Based Tourism Network. Become a DoiSter by living in a CraftStay in this beautiful Land of Three Mists.

"Let's get to know each other and travel together."

DoiSter

Proud to be highlander, DoiSter wannabe!



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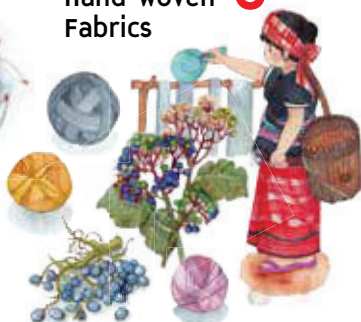


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Karen Woven Fabrics

Textiles or clothing not only can be used to identify the identity of each ethnic group, but it can also define classes of social identity within that ethnic group.



When a Paganyaw child turns one year old, the mother has to weave a shirt for her child's 'first shirt' ceremony in which she must finish weaving the shirt within one day. It is believed that when the first shirt is worn, the child will grow up healthily. The boys wear red-coloured shirt called 'Che Ko', while the girls wear long white dress called 'Che Wa' from 1 year old until they are married. The white colour of the dress symbolises purity so the men would be able to distinguish single women from married women.



Once married, the women would change from wearing long white dress to a black blouse called 'Che Su' and a tube skirt with Matmi pattern (Matmi refers to a weaving method using tie and dye technique). The black blouse symbolises the new role of the women as a wife and a mother with more responsibility. There are two patterns of Che Su shirt including the patterned woven blouse (Che Ki) and blouse embroidered with job's tears seeds (Che Boe), as job's tears seed represents motherhood that carries seed of life. On the other hand, the men would wear red-coloured shirt from when they were young until old. At present the men can wear shirts with many more colours but during important ceremonies, they would wear red-coloured shirt (Che Ko).



Paganyaw or Karen woven fabrics have long been popular amongst the group of people who like native fabrics, whether it is the men's shirt, long dress, blouse embroidered with job's tears seeds, patterned woven blouse, Karen shoulder bag, shawl, and scarf. This is part of the reason that the legacy of Paganyaw woven fabrics is still alive both in the textile industry and within the highland communities. Another important aspect is the beliefs and traditions that the mothers have passed on to the daughters. Apart from the weaving techniques, the belief that the women have to be able to weave has also been passed on, as married women have to weave clothes for themselves and their husbands, as well as weave the first shirt for their child to wear on their first birthday. All of these are what drives the community to carry on the art of weaving and to continually invent new creations.

The beauty yet simplicity of the Karen woven fabrics amazes and allures people to not only buy and use these fabrics but also to learn about the weaving of these fabrics. Being able to see the weaving process and to talk to the weavers and learn about the beliefs behind each pattern makes each of the fabrics more special and valuable.



Job's Tears Seeds Embroidered Fabrics

The most prominent Paganyaw fabric is the women's blouse embroidered with job's tears seeds or 'Che Boe' ('Che' means 'shirt' or 'blouse', while 'Boe' is 'job's tears', whereas the woven fabric with raised pattern is called 'Che Ki' or 'Che U' in which 'Ki' or 'U' means pattern).

The Paganyaw people believe that Boe or job's tears is the mother of all rice and therefore they grow job's tears in their rotational farm in order to help yield good crops. Once they have harvested the rice, the housewives would harvest the Boe to embroider onto the 'Che Boe' to symbolise motherhood. It is also believed that a type of Boe called 'Boe Na Thi' also protects people and keep them safe when going into the forest, therefore they would embroider the Boe onto the blouse they wear.

There are several types of job's tears seed that are used as beads in the embroidery; such as, Boe Pha Tho (long-shaped seed), Boe Wo Ma (medium-sized seed), Boe Poe Loe (round and small seed), Boe Na Thi Wa (white seed in a teardrop shape), and Boe Na Thi Su (grey or black seed in a teardrop shape).

Apart from the beauty of the job's tears seeds, the embroidery pattern is also beautiful and has meaning behind each one of them. The main motifs of the patterns are geometric shapes; such as, triangle, square, and circle, with the use of lines to connect the motifs together.

The familiar patterns are 'Yo Ho Kue' or pangolin scales (triangle), 'Koe Pe Phloe' (circle), 'Koe Pe Mue Nue' or sunset (square), as well as many other patterns. All of the patterns have meaning, for example, in the past, pangolin scales were used as medicine, therefore it is believed that women who wears a blouse with pangolin scales pattern will be healthy.



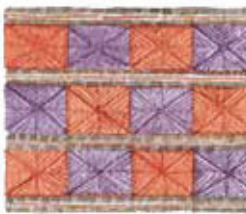
Boe Pha Tho (long-shaped seed) Boe Wo Ma (medium-sized seed)



Boe Poe Loe (round and small seed) Boe Na Thi Wa (white seed in a teardrop shape) Boe Na Thi Su (grey or black seed in a teardrop shape)



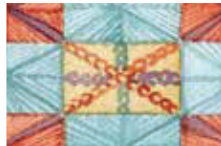
Triangle motif



Square motif



Circle motif



Line motif



Chui Cho Lo embroidery motif (dog's feet motif)



Natural Dyed Hand-woven Fabrics

Dyeing fabrics with natural dye colours is cost saving because the natural materials used to make colours are easily found in the community, and is also environmentally friendly as there are no chemical residues left in the soil or water. It is safe for the fabric producers to not have to breathe in the chemicals while dyeing or weaving, and is also great for the wearers as they can be sure that what they wear is safe for their skin and health.

In the past, the clothing of the ethnic groups residing in the mountain were all made with cotton threads dyed from natural materials; such as, indigo from Hom leaves, blue from the seed of Kho Kho Doe (East Indian Glory Bower), brown from several kinds of bark, and dark grey from Indian gooseberry. Some colours were made from animals, for example, red from lac, and some were made from other materials; such as, soil and stone.

The mordants are also obtained from natural materials easily found; including, lye water, mud water, shikakai water, and salt.



Each village has its own dyeing technique, most of which uses hot water dyeing method because its simple process is suitable for the villagers' behavior and the weather condition on the mountain. Apart from the technique, beliefs also play an important part in the dyeing process, for example, the Paganyaw people in Ban Huai Tong Ko believes that women on their periods are forbidden from dyeing fabric.

The trend of consuming eco-friendly products nowadays brings the local wisdom of producing natural dyed fabrics alive again. The wisdom is used to produce the fabrics into a variety of products and it is also what draws the tourists to come to the village and learn about the arts, beliefs, as well as relationship between human and nature. Interested people are invited to visit and learn these wisdoms at Ban Huai Tong Ko, Ban Huai Hi, Ban Mueang Phaem, and Ban Huai Kao Bon, while Ban Huai Hom is also famous for their sheep wool textiles.



Lawa Fabrics

Lawa ethnic group (Loe Wuea or Lua) inhabit villages in Mae Lanoi and Mae Sariang districts in northern Thailand. Despite being close neighbours, each village has slightly different customs, accents, and costumes.

Lawa women, for instance, wear straight blouses and striped black Pha Sin (tube skirts). They use the same Matmi technique (a kind of Ikat, which is a weaving method using the tie and dye technique) as Karen women and shorten their skirts to show off their knee accessories. They usually wear arm and leg bands with silver, beads, and weaved thread necklaces around their necks, matched with hanging earrings. The colours for Lawa women clothes are 'white' for simple everyday wear, and 'black', which is embroidered beautifully for special occasions.

Simplicity is key for Lawa men. They wear white long trousers and white long-sleeve shirts, with the reason for it being white because in the past they used undyed raw cotton. Lawa men wear weaved strings with long tufts, called 'Hanang Mu Ae' or 'Hanang To Peya', which is similar to Lawa women. While Lawa men put the tuft up front, Lawa women put it in the back. One important accessory for Lawa men is a knife with silver sheath, decorated with colourful thread tufts, making them look prestigious. For important events, Lawa men wrap their heads with red or pink cloth. For wedding ceremony, the groom will put on a checkered shawl called 'Pha Fia' and strap his waist with a long waistcloth wallet. Moreover, Lawa people have many different types of satchels, with each used for various purposes and customs.



Each fabric usually comes with a certain belief, and the most important fabric for Lawa people is 'Pha Tuan'.

Pha Tuan is used for both auspicious and misfortunate events. Before marriage, Lawa men must bring one sheet of Tuan fabric, Thai bank notes, Rupee money and Jiang money for a marriage proposal ceremony. The bride must prepare Pha Tuan for the wedding ceremony as well. When someone passes away, a sheet of Pha Tuan is used for covering the body. It is evident that Pha Tuan appears in every aspect of life with Lawa people.

Traditionally Lawa maidens must learn how to weave, and so study patterns of Pha Tuan from their mothers at a young age. If they learned it after marriage, it would be considered offending to the spirits and bring bad luck to the family. This is a stratagem in order to get Lawa young women to inherit weaving wisdom from their mothers. It is also believed that Pha Tuan's pattern came from the python snake, which is the animal Lawa people hold in the highest regard.

There are many more stories and tales about Lawa fabric await to be explored. Interested people are welcome to come and experience the weaving custom at Ban Pa Pae, Ban Dong, and Ban La-up in Chiang Mai.



Weaved Thread
Necklace

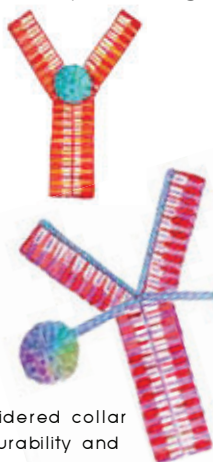


Pha Tuan

Groom's long waist-
cloth wallet



Embroidered collar
for durability and
beauty





Lahu Chae Lae Fabrics

The Lahu Chae Lae hilltribe sometimes call themselves Lahu Na, or Black Lahu. The reason behind referring to themselves as 'Black' is simply because black is the main colour of their costumes. These clothes are, in turn, usually decorated with fabrics of different colours. Each colour represents different components of their culture, and all are just as meaningful. 'Black' is for Black Lahu people and the black boar, 'White' for Khao Puk (their traditional rice dish), 'Blue' or 'Green' for vegetables, 'Red' for pig's blood, and 'Yellow' for tea.



The Lahu people live in cold, high altitude regions. Because of this they have had to adapt their clothing to protect their faces during harsh weather. Lahu women usually wear long cloaks with long sleeves, breeches and armbands. When the weather gets really cold, they wrap additional thick fabric around their heads. In the case of Lahu men, they wear half-length black cloaks (with blue or navy-blue lining) and breeches, donned with red waistcloth. They normally use bags or small satchels for carrying personal items. During important ceremonies, they decorate their costumes beautifully with silver beads and various other accessories. The wife is generally the one who sews new costumes for herself, her husband and all her children. These are then used at the New Year ceremony to mark the bright, new beginning.

The most amazing thing about Lahu Chae Lae fabrics is their sewing technique that neatly hides the cloth strip. Interestingly, everything is done by hand, thus making just one cloak is often a year-long commitment. Lahu women devote all their skill and patience to weaving and sewing perfect clothes since when Lahu men seek a partner, they will look at the woman's weaving skill and how neat and detailed she is. Ban Cha Bo takes pride in their weaving skills and those who are interested can come and enjoy a true craftstay experience here by testing their concentration level and sewing skills, while enjoy sipping tea in the midst of beautiful scenery.



Lahu Daeng Fabrics

The Lahu Daeng (Red Lahu) and Lahu Chae Lae (Black Lahu) tribes are related. Apart from being close neighbours, they share many cultural similarities; such as, beliefs, languages, mannerisms and traditional costumes, with some slight exceptions. For example, while Lahu Chae Lae women wear pants, Lahu Daeng women wear tube skirts with waist-length blouse. Lahu Daeng men's pants are ankle-length while Lahu Chae Lae men's pants are around shin-length. For the Lahu Daeng (Red Lahu) people, naturally, the colour red holds great significance. So while women's costumes usually have lots of red thread and fabric, men go with more darkened colours and less patterns. Bags made with red thread, which they carry everywhere, are telltale signs of their tribe. For special ceremonies; such as, Lahu New Year, they wear exquisite velvet costumes embroidered with shiny sequins, particularly the women, who also adorn themselves with shiny silver accessories.

In the past, Lahu Daeng tribeswomen came up with many unique patterns of embroidery, including line stitch, filling stitch, cross stitch, as well as patchwork techniques, all of which are handmade. Even though in this day and age, there are many modern conveniences; such as, sewing machine that takes less time than sewing by hand, many Lahu Daeng women still do it all by hand. They are all highly skilled in cross-stitch embroidery for making exquisite patterned bags or satchels. On your next visit to Mae Hong Son, visit Ban Pha Mon, as many Lahu Daeng women will be more than happy to teach you their unique skill.



Tai Yai Costumes

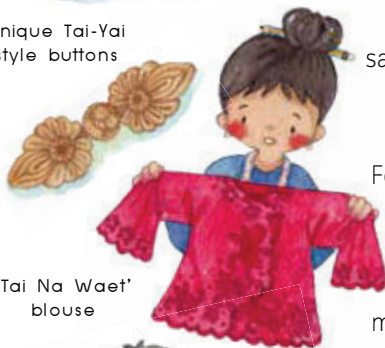
Like other ethnic groups in Mae Hong Son, the Tai Yai group also has stunning costumes quite similar to other Tai groups. Since they do not live in the highlands, they gain easy access to the modern technology thus the Tai Yai costumes have developed quickly and absorbed aspects from other cultures. Whether it be texture, pattern or embroidery technique, they quickly adapt and adjust it to their liking.

Tai Yai women like to wear Tai blouses called 'Tai Na Waet', which are brightly coloured blouses embroidered with flower patterns and can be short or long sleeves. They are typically worn with matching colour tube skirt or alternatively tube skirts with colours contrasting the blouse. Tai Yai men usually wear Chinese-style pants called 'Kon Tai' with shirts called 'Taek Pung', and a satchel as an accessory. Most Tai Yai men wear a straw hat known as 'Kup Tai', but some instead wrap their heads with thick fabric during sunny days.

For their traditional ceremonies, wealthy Tai Yai people like to wear new clothes. As such, the profession of tailor became a popular career choice for skilled women. On the other hand, those who are not as skilled or simply does not have access to sewing machines help by producing fabric buttons. While said buttons may seem like a small and a somewhat unimportant part of their garbs, they are actually integral, exclusive components of what make Tai clothing what it is. Come and experience the Tai Yai tailoring technique at Ban Mueang Pon, one of the largest Tai Yai clothing source in Mae Hong Son. You will not be disappointed.



Unique Tai-Yai style buttons



'Tai Na Waet' blouse



'Taek Pung' shirt



Hmong Fabric

Native fabric lovers have been obsessed with Hmong fabric for a long time, and they still are. With colourful and meticulous patterns, Hmong fabric has been adapted to make cloaks, bags and hats. The vibrant colours and the detailed patterns have contributed to the value of the products made from Hmong fabric, in which the cost of the product depends on the time and difficulty level it takes in the making process. These include (but are not limited to) working with hemp fibers, unique weaving techniques, creating patterns with a special candle painting technique, embroidery, patchwork and more. For those interested who wants to learn more about Hmong's pattern and embroidery technique, Ban Huai Makhuea Som is the place to go.



Lisu Fabric

Lisu people are very skilled at creating amazing patterns and colours on the fabric using patchwork techniques, making it a popular option for those who are fond of native fabric. Many souvenirs like bags and hats that are widely sold are the creation of the Lisu people. They are also highly skilled in sewing cords and in making round waistcloth turfs, which are typically used for further decorating other products. There are more beautiful and interesting Lisu fabric to explore and Ban Mai Saha Samphan welcome everyone who is interested.



Basketry

Many tribes and groups of certain ethnicities produce some kinds of woven utensils, usually made with strips of bamboo, and every village has a number of people privy to the skill of weaving. In the past, almost every man was able to weave many different kinds of baskets; such as, wicker baskets, flat baskets, and threshing baskets. That being said, young men have to know how to weave simple baskets for carrying chickens around, to the very least.

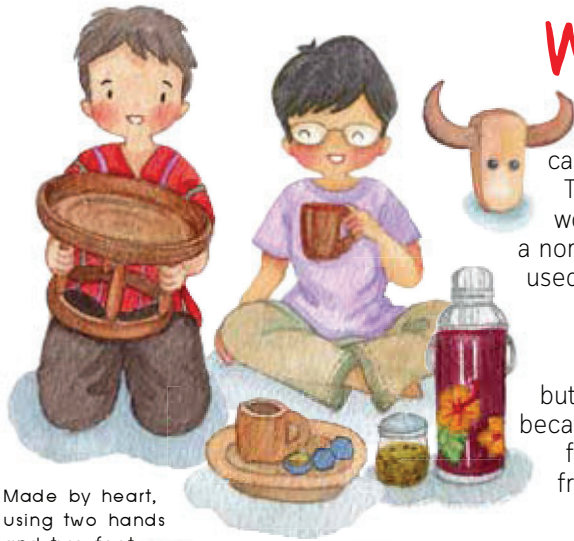
With their lifestyle that changes over time, there are now less people skilled in weaving. On the other hand, each village still has a few 'Sala' (weaving experts) to make all wicker products for their community. These are made to be affordable to all, but many times they choose to share the products.

Wicker products are not only a part of their lives, but also hold a place as charms to be used in traditional ceremonies. A prominent example of such a product is the 'Ta Lao', a kind of Tung (northern Thai style flag), which comes with many patterns. Some works from particularly artistic Sala are often thought of as true works of art due to their beauty, meticulousness and creativity. For example, the 'Kup Tai' or Tai-Yai weaved-Bamboo hats from Ban Mueang Pon, as they can be worn or be used for decoration.

Simpler wicker products are very easy to learn and does not take much time. Bigger ones, though, can take many days to learn. There are many communities in Mae Hong Son that are willing to teach you their unique weaving techniques. The diversity of ethnic groups in Mae Hong Son is its charm, as it allows visitors to explore the different variety of wicker works and techniques unique to each ethnic group in one province.



Woodcarving



Made by heart,
using two hands
and two feet.



'Wooden mortar
makes the best
chili paste.'



Many types of softwood can be carved into sturdy utensils and furniture.

These timbers, such as 'Mai So' (gamari wood), are usually used for making 'Tok', a northern Thai tray. Teak is also frequently used for making trays or ladles. Bamboo is another wood often used as it is reasonably pliant and easy to form.

As such, it is carved into many things, but the most popular one is bamboo cup because many ethnic groups tend to use it for serving tea. Since people had more free time in the old days, they would go looking for wood scraps or logs in the forest to be used in the production of utensils without having to buy any.

Nowadays the Karen elders at Ban Mueang Phaem and Ban Huai Tong Ko, and the Lahu grandpas at Ban Cha Bo spend their free time carving many products for use in their households, as well as make souvenirs for visitors who visit their villages. For those who are interested, these kind elders are happy to pass on their knowledge.



Knife and Metal Forging

Mae Hong Son people sustain themselves on farming and occasionally scavenging for food in the forest. Therefore, they must have skills to make and repair their tools. Typically, they utilise knives, hoes, and spades, which they all craft from the ground up. Metal crafting and processes like it are central in every smaller ethnic group, in which the priorities are usefulness and durability. In the past, they sold these tools within the community only, but sometimes extending the courtesy to neighbouring villages who used them for farming or scavenging forests. Lately, though, knife crafting from Ban Huai Tong Ko has become popular among tourists, and so smaller knives are forged to sell as souvenirs.

In regards to cultural traditions, many ethnic groups like the Tai Yai group, the Lawa, and the Karen tribes have developed astounding performances, with their crafted swords in focus. Some other interesting facts about knife, sword, and metal forging includes the Lawa people putting a sword as charm under the pillow of someone who is sick or suffering from nightmares. They believe the act of putting a hermetic sword under the pillow of a person will drive away all misfortune. Lahu people believe having a blacksmith is the most important factor when establishing a new village. Finally, the Karen tribe forbids any knife forging activities when someone passes away, due to fear of the spirit coming back to haunt them and make them sick.

Today, Ban Huai Tong Ko, Ban Huai Hi, Ban Pa Pae, and Ban Pha Mon are villages that have opened up to the public and are happy to teach people about their knife and metal forging.

Paper Cutting and Metal Chasing

One important local wisdom of the Tai Yai people is creating perforated framework on colourful papers and metal plates, both of which can be used as a decoration. The process, called 'Tong Lai', includes folding papers and metal plates and then using specialised tools to carve in intricate patterns. This technique has been, and still is passed down to newer generations. Perforated framework by the Tai-Yai is usually used to decorate buildings, temples, Chong Phara (castle for Lord Buddha), lamps, flags and offerings to both spirits and Buddha. Paper cutting is not difficult to learn and does not take very long. Learning the art of metal chasing, though, needs a lot of training. Interested people are always welcome at Ban Mueang Pon, Ban To Phae, and Ban Pha Bong. Not only you learn how to make perforated framework, but you also experience their unique culture.



Silverwork

Silverware is indispensable for every ethnic group in Mae Hong Son. In the past, silver earrings were a must-have item for Karen men and women, as they liked to use them for decorating their bodies. The Lawa people typically wear silver necklaces, bracelets, and armbands for their traditional rites. Hmong, Lahu, and Lisu people must decorate their bodies and costumes with lots of silver accessories during important ceremonies. They say you can tell which family is wealthy by looking at the amount of silver accessories the daughter wears.

The Lawa community at Ban La-up specialises in silverwork. Their designs are both traditional and contemporary and have always been selling throughout Thailand.

For those who are interested to learn more about silverwork, or those who are simply interested in buying beautiful silver accessories, come and give Ban La-up a visit.



“Mae Hong Son DoiSter CraftStay” Routes

“Mae Hong Son DoiSter CraftStay” is a travelling style that combines way of life and handicrafts of the communities that are the members of the Mae Hong Son Community Based Tourism (CBT) Network. There are several options, whether it is listed by communities or by routes, for interested people to choose from before embarking on their journey as follows:

Lahu Fabrics Route : Explore Lahu fabrics, where visitors can learn the arts of embroidery from the Red Lahu at Ban Pha Mon and learn about creating patterns with colours from the Lahu Shele at Ban Cha Bo.

Pang Mapha's Fabrics and Woodwork Route : Learn the weaving, basketry, and woodcarving techniques from the Paganyaw people at Ban Mueang Phaem and from the Lahu Shele at Ban Cha Bo.

Karen Natural-dyed Hand-woven Fabrics Route : Discover how the Paganyaw produce hand-woven fabrics and try making natural dyes using different techniques and materials at Ban Huai Kaeo Bon, Ban Huai Hi, and Ban Huai Tong Ko.

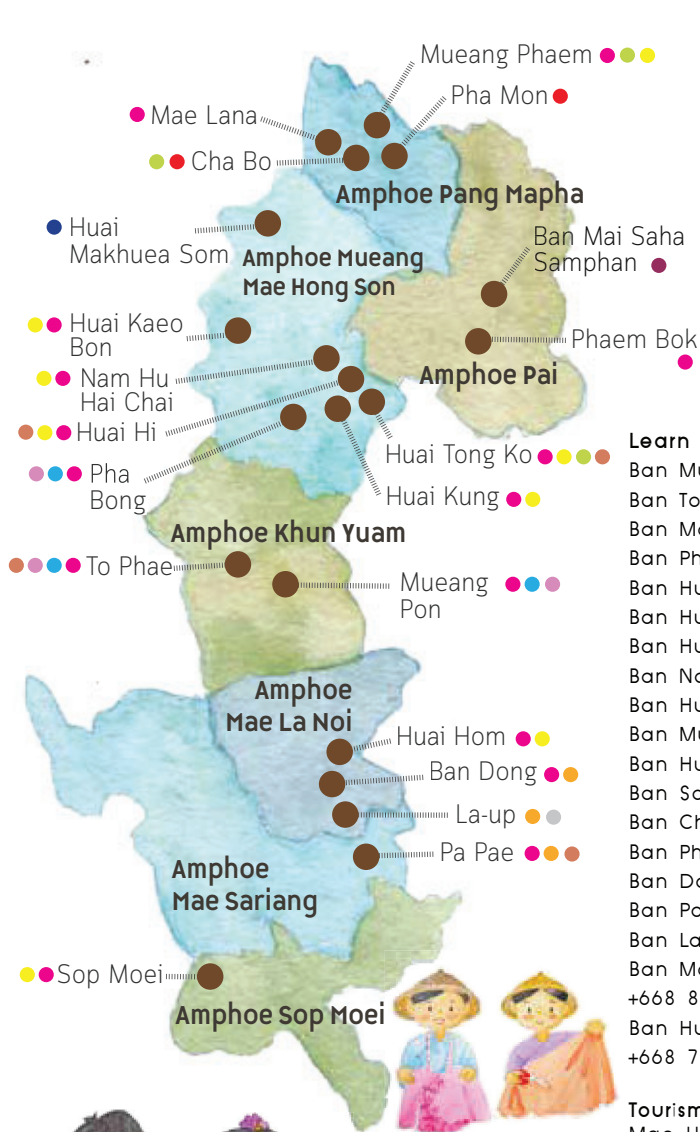
Tai Yai Crafts Route : The Tai Yai communities in Amphoe Khun Yuam that boast amazing handicrafts are Ban Mueang Pon and Ban To Phae. Learn about Tai Yai clothes and the making of Kup Tai hat at Ban Mueang Pon and then explore the art of metal chasing and knife forging, as well as watch Tai Yai performance at Ban To Phae.

Lawa Crafts Route : Visit southern Mae Hong Son to explore Lawa crafts. Learn about natural dye colours and weaving techniques at Ban Pa Pae, find out about the connection of the beliefs and Lawa fabrics at Ban Dong, and enjoy learning about silverwares and buying the beautiful products at Ban La-up.

Lawa Fabrics and Karen Fabrics Southern Route : Discover the difference in cultures of the two ethnic groups, which are Lawa and Paganyaw. Explore the stories about and techniques in weaving Lawa fabrics at Ban Dong, and visit Ban Huai Hom to learn about natural dye colours and the production of sheep wool woven fabrics.

There are several other interesting “Mae Hong Son DoiSter CraftStay” route that you can explore, or if you would like a route that fit your interest, Thai Localista and DoiSter can help create a customised route for you.





- Basketry
- Woodcarving
- Silverwork
- Knife forging
- Paper cutting and metal chasing
- Tai Yai clothes making
- Lahu fabrics
- Karen woven fabrics
- Lawa fabrics
- Hmong fabrics
- Lisu fabrics

Learn to be a DoiSter with CraftStay

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For a pleasant DoiSter CraftStay
 experience for both the visitors and
 the host, please make a reservation
 at least 1 week in advance, as the
 community needs some time to make
 a preparation.



Supporting

crafts and handicrafts from local communities helps continuing the legacy, cultural heritage, and local wisdom for the future generations to further develop these arts and crafts to make a living and to preserve these wisdoms for the future.



amazing
Indi



DoiSter

“Let’s get to know each other and travel together.”