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Kua Lao ★★ LAO Kua Lao serves excellent Lao fare in a traditional atmosphere. This restaurant, set in a restored colonial mansion, offers music and Lao dancing each evening. It's a bit of tourist kitsch, but the staff is very kind, and their desire to infuse your dining experience with Lao culture is quite genuine. Nowhere else will you find such an extensive menu of Lao food with English descriptions (and pictures), and many will appreciate the numerous options for vegetarians, not to mention a whole page of tempting Lao desserts. Try the *laap* (or *larp*), a mince of fish, chicken, or beef mixed with spices and mint; it's excellent when accompanied by a basket of sticky rice and eaten by hand. If you're going upcountry or heading out to the boondocks, this is a good place for a primer on Lao cuisine.

