



Best of Laos - 14 Days (#19273)

Note: Price printed on this PDF is valid until **29-12-2024** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

Trip Highlights

Luang Prabang - Xieng Khouang - Vang Vieng - Vientiane - Pakse - Salavan - Si Phan Don

Detailed Itinerary

Day 01

Day 1: Arrive in Luang Prabang

Sabaidee! Welcome to Luang Prabang, Laos. You are greeted by your guide and driver at Luang Prabang International Airport for your transfer to the hotel.

You will have time to relax at your hotel and adjust to the pace of Luang Prabang. This tranquil town with its gleaming temple roofs, fading colonial architecture and stunning mountain backdrop has been claimed by UNESCO to be "the best-preserved traditional city in Southeast Asia".

Built in the late 18th century, Wat Mai is the largest and most richly decorated temple in town. It holds great significance in Laos culture for both religious and aesthetic reasons. The monastery served as a temple for the royal family and has long been the residence of the Pra Sangkharat, the highest Laotian Buddhist dignitary. The National Museum (closed on



Tuesdays), housed in the former Royal Palace, showcases many treasures of Laos' royal past and features the Prabang, the sacred Buddha image for which Luang Prabang was named. Rising 150m in the centre of town, Mount Phousi cuts a distinctive figure on the Luang Prabang skyline. The hill is a popular as a place to watch the sun rise or set. From the summit you enjoy spectacular 360 degree views across the city and its many temples, and over the surrounding landscape to the mountains in the distance.

The Night Market here is a great place for wandering, offering a lovely variety of handmade textiles crafted by local and hill-tribe people, along with street food, knick-knacks and friendly banter.

Overnight in Luang Prabang.

Meal: No Meal

Day 02

Day 2: Luang Prabang - Pak Ou Cave and City Tour

Option: Early wake-up call possible to join the locals giving food to hundreds of Buddhist monks returning from morning prayers. Take a stroll through morning market and take part in this everyday ritual.

You will then visit Pak Ou Caves, located 25 km upriver from Luang Prabang right on the river bank at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Ou Rivers, are a well known Buddhist pilgrimage site with many statues and statuettes of the Buddha in the traditional Luang Prabang style. Enjoy splendid natural scenery along the way and observing local fishermen and daily activities along the river. The caves, locally called Tam Ting, are filled with thousands of gold lacquered Buddha statues and are noted for their miniature Buddha sculptures. Hundreds of wooden Buddhist figures take many different positions, including meditation, teaching, peace, rain and reclining (nirvana).

Visit Wat Xieng Thong, the largest and most splendid temple of Luang Prabang royal city, best known for its impressive Tree of Life mural depicting the Buddhist story. Built in 1513, Wat Visoun or Wisunalat is the oldest and perhaps the most beautiful temple of Luang Prabang. The temple strikes visitors with its huge stupa, called That Makmo, which dominates the temple compound. Because of its odd shape, this stupa is commonly known as the watermelon (Makmo) stupa instead of its official name That Pathum (Lotus Stupa). The small Traditional Arts & Ethnology Center (closed on Mondays) has over 400 objects representing over 30 distinct ethnic groups. You can view the collection, comprised of traditional clothing and domestic textiles, jewellery, religious and ritual objects, and other items.

Overnight in Luang Prabang.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 03

Day 3: Luang Prabang - Kuangsi Waterfalls



Visit the Free the Bears Sanctuary, to see first hand the good work being done to help the bears. The sanctuary was opened in 2003 and houses Asiatic Black bears which were cubs when they were confiscated by the Forestry Department as they were being taken to the markets for sale. All are growing rapidly and are in good health. Khuang Si Waterfalls, where water tumbles over multi-tiered limestone formations into cool and crystal-clear pools, is ideal for anyone seeking an enjoyable escape when the heat becomes unbearable. These waterfalls are a paradise setting surrounded by lush forest. Spend your time splashing around in the pools or walking along the forest paths in the upper part of this fall. Drive back to town. Overnight in Luang Prabang.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 04**Day 4: Luang Prabang - Drive to Xiengkhouang**

Today you'll be driven to Xieng Khuang, known for the famous Plains of Jars. The 8-hours' drive is very long, but you can make many stops at your pleasure, to stretch your legs and take some photographs of local villages, people and scenery. Arrive in Phonsavan, the capital of Xieng Khuang and check into your hotel. Overnight in Phonsavan.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 05**Day 5: Xiengkhouang - Plain of Jars and Muang Khoun**

In the morning, you will explore the Plains of Jars, an impressive archaeological site where hundreds of large stone jars are scattered across a plateau. You first explore Site 1, where a giant urn weighing thousands of kilos can be found, along with 250 other jars with oval or round openings, some even have a square opening. Then head to Site 2 which is situated on a hill. Take in the fresh air, enjoy a panoramic view, and shoot photos of villages dotting the valley while learning more about the enigmatic jars, and developing your own origin theory behind them. Discover Site 3, where around 150 jars are located on top of a small hill. Here, you can enjoy great views not only of the surrounding plains, but also of a Lao village which is a short walk from the jar site on an adjacent hillside.

Visit Muang Khoun, previously the capital of Xieng Khuang before its destruction during the war. The only surviving buildings are a temple (Wat) and a hospital. The ride passes through peaceful countryside with rolling hills, rice paddies and minority villages.

Overnight in Phonsavan.

Meal: Breakfast



Day 06**Day 6: Xiengkhouang - Drive to Vang Vieng**

Today you will travel by road to Vang Vieng, a journey through stunning landscapes, and you will stop at some villages to interact with the friendly local people.

The small town of Vang Vieng, nestled on a bend of the Nam Song River, offers stunning scenery with a mixture of quiet water and limestone outcroppings. Many unspoiled areas remain around Vang Vieng, despite recent tourism developments. Overnight in Vang Vieng.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 07**Day 7: Vang Vieng - Free Day**

Today is free to explore around Vang Vieng. Cycle out around the limestone karsts, or go kayaking, rock climbing or trekking. The evening here is a perfect opportunity to relax on the riverbank with a cold drink and take in the view.

Overnight in Vang Vieng.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 08**Day 8: Vang Vieng - Drive to Nam Ngum and Vientiane**

After breakfast, you visit Tham Jang Cave, once used by the local people as a hideout from Chinese invaders in the early 19th century. Continue driving to Vientiane with stop en route at Nam Ngum Lake to board a long tail boat to see its beautiful islets and talk with local fishermen before continuing driving to Vientiane, the capital city of Laos.

Upon arrival at Vientiane in the afternoon, check in at your hotel and relax. Vientiane, although the capital of Laos, has the feel of a small town, with a curious mix of Lao, Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese and French influences.

Overnight in Vientiane.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 09**Day 9: Vientiane - City Tour and Buddha Park**

Breakfast at your hotel. Then visit the Lao National Museum, housed in a structure built in 1925 as the French governor's residence, presents the history of Laos, highlighting the Laotian people's struggle to free the country from foreign occupiers and imperialist forces. The exhibits include dinosaur bones, an intact jar from the mysterious Plain of Jars in Xieng Khuoang, unexploded ordnance from the American War and ponderous displays that tell the story of the Pathet Lao. Visit to the city's oldest temple, Wat Sisaket. Dating back to 1818, Sisaket is the most important heritage temple in terms of philology, epigraphs, iconography, historiography and architecture now standing in Laos. Thousand of Buddha images from many countries, long lost architectural styles, sculptures and paintings are all found at this temple. View and climb the imposing Patuxay Monument, an irresistibly photogenic structure which is well known as Vientiane's own Arc de Triomphe. Explore Pha That Luang (Great Sacred Stupa), the most important national monument in Laos, and a symbol of both the Buddhist religion and Lao sovereignty.

Drive to the outskirts of the city to visit Buddha Park, an enchanting collection of Buddhist and Hindu sculptures scattered in a meadow along the Mekong River near the Friendship Bridge. The approximately 200 religious images here were created by a mysterious monk spreading his philosophy on life and revealing his ideas about the universe. The park's signature piece is a large but very flat reclining Buddha. However, the most unusual of the structures is best described as a "giant pumpkin with a dead tree sticking out its top" (Rough Guide). You enter through the open mouth of a demon head and climb up the staircases from hell to heaven, viewing the artist's conception of life at each level of the universe, and can take in an overview of the park from atop the pumpkin.

Overnight in Vientiane.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 10

Day 10: Vientiane - Flight to Pakse

After breakfast, Free time until you pick up and transfer to the airport for your flight to Pakse. On arrival, pick up by your guide and driver then transfer to check in at your hotel.

Overnight in Pakse.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 11

Day 11: Pakse - Bolaven Plateau - Tad Lo

Head out to Bolaven Plateau, known for its temperate climate, coffee plantations and mist-shrouded waterfalls. Visit Tad Fane Waterfalls with twin waterfalls plummeting into a deep gorge surrounded by flourishing vegetation and also the beautiful Tad Yueng Waterfalls before you continue to Paksong, ideal for coffee cultivation, particularly Robusta. You will



stop by an organic coffee farm to see how the local Lao people involved in the coffee industry live and work, and enjoy a cup of truly fresh coffee in the coolness of the Bolaven Plateau.

Visit the beautiful Tad Lo Waterfalls in the afternoon where you can swim at the base of the falls

Overnight in Tad Lo Lodge.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 12

Day 12: Bolaven Plateau - Wat Phou and 4000 islands

You will travel by road to the religious complex of Wat Phou which reflects the Hindu culture of the pre-Buddhist Khmer society that constructed it. The summit, Phu Kao, immediately commands attention because of its shape, identified in ancient times with the linga, the phallic symbol of Shiva, from which originated its ancient name, Lingaparvata, and its reputation as a sacred hill. The permanent spring at the foot of the cliffs is probably one of the main reasons the ancient rulers of the area established a sanctuary to Shiva at this spot.

You then head out to the 4,000 Islands region where the Mekong can reach up to 14km wide during the rainy season and it is dotted with thousands of islands of various sizes. Arrive at Don Khong Island, the largest islands of the 4,000 Islands region. After checking in at your hotel, you will have free time to explore this quaint island and its villages by bicycle or foot.

Overnight in Don No Island.

Meal: Breakfast

Day 13

Day 13: 4000 Islands - Explore and back to Pakse

After breakfast, you will take a boat trip to Don Khone Island. See the old French heritage sites such as colonial buildings and the remnants of a locomotive from the first Lao railway. Continue to the marvelous Liphu Waterfalls. Also called "Devil's Corridor", it is one of the most beautiful waterfalls marking the Lao border with Cambodia. Next is the breathtaking Khone Phapheng Waterfalls, Southeast Asia's biggest waterfalls and is known as the "Niagara of the East". Drive back to Pakse.

Overnight in Pakse.

Meal: Breakfast



Day 14**Day 14: Pakse - Departure**

The day is free at your leisure until transfer to Pakse International Airport for your departure flight. We wish you a pleasant flight!

End of services.

Meal: Breakfast

Inclusions

- Accommodation in twin/double room with daily breakfast at the below indicated room types (see hotel category list below) (check-in and check-out around noontime).
- 1 Day private boat to Pak Ou Cave.
- All transfers and transportation with Air-Con vehicles (types of vehicles depend on the number of pax).
- Local ENGLISH speaking guides.
- Boat trip - as per program.
- All entrance fees - as per program.
- Meals (B/L/D) (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner) as indicated in the program .
- 02 bottles of mineral water per person per day on bus - on days of transfer and sightseeing only.
- Government tax and service charge.

Exclusions

- Airfares (international and domestic)
- Meals (other than mentioned in the program)
- Drinks
- Early check-in or late check-out
- Visa - as per country requirements
- Tips
- Additional transfer required due to any emergency situation
- Mineral water beyond that which is supplied
- Personal Insurance
- Optional excursions and activities
- Items of a personal nature (Phone calls, laundry, beverages, etc.)



- Peak season surcharges if any

Note

Hotels Used

Standard Category

Luang Prabang - Sala Prabang Mekong Riverside Hotel (3*) (Classic Room)

Xiangkhouang - Vansana Plain Of Jars Hotel (3*) (Deluxe Room)

Vang Vieng - Vansana Vangvieng Hotel (3*) (Standard DBL/TWIN Room)

Vientiane Capital - Family Boutique Hotel Vientiane (Superior Room)

Pakse - Pakse Hotel (3*) (Deluxe Room)

Salavan - Tadlo Lodge (Standard Room)

Si Phan Don - Pon Arena Hotel (Standard Room)

Superior Category

Luang Prabang - Luang Prabang View Hotel (Superior Room)

Xiangkhouang - Vansana Plain Of Jars Hotel (3*) (Deluxe Room)

Vang Vieng - Amari Hotel Vang Vieng - Superior River View (King/Twins)

Vientiane Capital - Salana Boutique Hotel (Deluxe Room)

Pakse - Champasak Grand Hotel (4*) (Superior Riverview Room)

Salavan - Tadlo Lodge (Standard Room)

Si Phan Don - Pon Arena Hotel (Deluxe Room)

Deluxe Category

Luang Prabang - Satri House Secret Retreats (5*) (Deluxe Room)

Xiangkhouang - Vansana Plain Of Jars Hotel (3*) (Deluxe Room)

Vang Vieng - Vang Vieng Riverside Boutique Resort (Deluxe Room)

Vientiane Capital - Settha Palace (5*) (Deluxe Room)

Pakse - Athena Hotel Pakse (4*) (Deluxe Pool View Room)

Salavan - Tadlo Lodge (Standard Room)

Si Phan Don - Pon Arena Hotel (Mekong Suite)

Several points to note

1. The above tour prices are based on our current transportation rates. Increasing petrol rates might affect our transportation and boat fees, in which case we reserve the right to revise our current rates. If any increase should arise we will of course keep you well informed.
2. Availability: Please note that if a certain hotel is not available at the time of booking, then we will gladly make alternative



suggestions in the same category. We will advise you accordingly with the surcharge if any. As a result, we would highly appreciate it if you could advise us to block rooms soonest possible to guarantee the rooms and rates in period of high and peak season

3. All the above points of interest are open for visit based on current updates. In case of closure for construction or any other reason, we will replace with a similar point of interest.

4. Above itinerary is based on the current flight schedule. In case of flight changes, the itinerary will be changed accordingly.

5. No early check in or late checkout is included except those indicated in the program. Generally, the check in time is 14.00pm and check out time is 12.00pm.

6. Visas into Laos is required except for countries who have signed the visa exemption contracts. Please contact us for visa information details.

Remarks: Passport must be valid 6 months ahead since the time of departing the visited country

7. Compulsory dinners on Dec 24th (Christmas), Dec 31st (New Year) and applicable public holiday event within your host country will be advised at time of booking.

Program Touring / Guide

Private touring

Periodic Departure

01 Oct, 2024 to 31 Dec, 2024

Standard

AUD 3,561 P P twin share

AVAILABLE

Superior

AUD 4,364 P P twin share

AVAILABLE

Deluxe

AUD 5,343 P P twin share

AVAILABLE

