

LAOS LUSCIOUS LANDSCAPES

Luang Prabang - Vientiane

5 Days / 4 Nights

Day 01: Welcome to Laos!

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Welcome to Luang Prabang.

Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport by your guide. The guide will assist you in transferring to your hotel for check-in. Please note that the standard check-in time is 14:00. Depending on your arrival time, you may decide to add an additional tour at this point.

MOUNT PHOUSI

Rising 150 m above the center of town, Mount Phousi cuts a distinctive figure on the Luang Prabang skyline. The hill is popular as a place to watch the sun rise or set over the Mekong River. From the summit, enjoy a spectacular 360-degree outlook across the city and its many temples and out over the surrounding landscape to the mountains in the distance. For a complete experience, go up Mount Phousi on one side and use the other set of steps to make your way down again. Returning from Mount Phousi, take a stroll over the colorful night bazaar, where a wide range of handicrafts can be found.

Notice: Revealing clothes such as shorts and skirts above the knees and bare shoulders are prohibited in sacred places and temples.

LUANG PRABANG

Luang Prabang, the ancient capital of Luang Prabang Province in northern Laos, lies in a valley at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers. Inhabited for thousands of years, it was the royal capital of the country until 1975. It's known for its many Buddhist temples, including the gilded Wat Xieng Thong, dating to the 16th century, and Wat Mai, once the residence of the head of Laotian Buddhism.

Accommodation: As Selected.

Day 02: Luang Prabang – City Tour & Pak Ou Caves

(B/L)



Breakfast at your hotel.

Departing from the hotel at 8:30, explore the open-air morning market in the old town. There are only a few large grocery stores here; instead, food is still produced by small farming families and villages and brought to Luang Prabang from the surrounding rural areas. The guide will explain the common vegetables and fruits that are in season, and you can pick up some snacks for later. After the market, visit Wat Mai Suwannaphumaham ("New Monastery"), the National Museum (Royal Palace), and Hor Phra Bang.

MORNING MARKET

This small market is the Laotian "supermarket," where they come to buy their fresh fruit, vegetables, and meat, which are offered in showcases, which are not always the way we used to see them in most of our countries. Some products are coming from the jungle and will be highly exotic for travelers from western countries.

WAT MAI SUWANNAPHUMAHAM

The impressive Wat Mai Suwannaphumaham is one of Luang Prabang's largest and most richly decorated temples. Both its interior and exterior are extensively adorned with black and red lacquer decoration and gold leaf. The temple, also known as Wat Mai, meaning "new temple", was founded around 1780 by King Anurat of the Luang Prabang Kingdom.

NATIONAL MUSEUM (ROYAL PALACE) AND HOR PHRA BANG

Set in a spacious, well-tended garden just off one of Luang Prabang's main boulevards (Sisavangvong Road), you will find the fascinating Royal Palace Museum, which is also known as Hor Kham. The museum is well worth a couple of hours of your time if you want to learn more about Lao history and culture. Originally the residence of the king, the museum was designed in the French Beaux-Arts style, with many tasteful accents of traditional Lao culture. When the communists came to power in 1975, they took over the palace and sent the royal family to re-education camps. The palace was converted into a museum that was opened to the public in 1995 after careful renovation and remains in good condition. The grounds contain a number of other buildings, including a new exhibition hall, a chapel (Hor Phra Bang), and a statue of King Sisavangvong.



WAT XIENG THONG

Founded at the tip of the Luang Prabang peninsula, it is one of Laos most beautiful and richly decorated temples. This temple is a royal temple built by King Setthathirath in 1559 on the banks of the Mekong River. It is one of the few temples that was not destroyed during the Black Flag Army invasion of 1887.

Travel by boat to Tham Pak Ou Caves.

THAM PAK OU CAVES

Pak Ou Caves, one of the most respected holy sites in Lao, have a history dating back thousands of years. Packed with over 4,000 Buddha icons, the caves, a shrine to the river spirit and Lord Buddha, are set in a dramatic limestone cliff at the point where the Mekong joins the Nam Ou River. There are two caves to visit: the lower cave called Tham Ting and the upper cave called Tham Theung, both boasting miniature Buddhist figures that are mostly made from wood.

Dinner on your own account.

Accommodation: As Selected.

Day 03: Luang Prabang - Kuang Si Waterfall - Flight to Vientiane

(B/L)



Breakfast at your hotel.

Travel by vehicle to the beautiful Tad Kuang Si Waterfall, stopping on the way to visit Hmong and Khamu villages. Hmong and Khamu villages have different structures and ways of life; here, we learn about their traditions and the differences between Lao, Khamu, and Hmong culture.

KUANG SI WATERFALL AND BEAR RESCUE CENTER

Tad Kuang Si Waterfall is the biggest waterfall in the Luang Prabang area, with three tiers leading to a 50-meter drop into spectacular azure pools before flowing downstream. The pools also make great swimming holes and are very popular with both tourists and locals. Visit the Bear Rescue Center within the Kuang Si Waterfall Park (no extra entrance ticket).

Many of the bears at the Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre were destined for bile farms or kept illegally as 'pets'. Since 2003, we've been working with the Luang Prabang Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office to create a safe haven for these victims of the illegal wildlife trade. The bears can now relax in hammocks, play with new friends, and live a safe, healthy life.

KUANG SI BUTTERFLY PARK

Situated 300 m before the entrance of Kuang Si Waterfall, Kuang Si Butterfly Park is a project that was initiated in January 2014 by two passionate people from Holland. The mission was to create a research center studying and publishing about Laos butterflies, host plants, and preservation due to environmental issues in Laos. A nice little café on the pond can finish the visit with a good coffee and delicious baguette in a beautiful setting.

Return to the hotel and transfer to the airport in time for the late flight to Vientiane.

Transfer from the airport in Vientiane to your hotel.

Rest of the evening free time.

Dinner on your own account.

Accommodation: As Selected.

Day 04: Vientiane – City Tour & Buddha Park

(B/L)



Breakfast at your hotel.

Discover the charms of Vientiane, a quiet but endearing capital city. The tour includes Wat Sisaket, Hor Phra Keo, That Luang Stupa, and Patuxay Monument. Visit the Talat Sao (Morning Market), where you can find an abundance of locally made handicrafts.

WAT SISAKET

Wat Si Saket is an early 19th-century Buddhist monastery in the center of Vientiane. It is the oldest temple in the town that is still in its original form. The temple was built in 1820 near the Royal Palace in the center of town by King Anouvong, the last King of Vientiane. It is one of the very few temples that survived the destruction that came with the Siamese armies that looted and burned the city in 1827. The temple was restored in the 1930s. Next to the cloister is the more recent, active part of the temple, with resident monks. Right across the street is another one of Vientiane's most important temples, the Hor Phra Keo.

HOR PHRA KEO

Hor Phra Keo is one of Laos' most highly venerated temples, now turned into a museum. The temple derives its name from the Emerald Buddha, Thailand's most highly revered Buddha image, which has been enshrined in the temple for over 200 years.

THAT LUANG STUPA

The Luang Stupa, or "Great Stupa," is the most important Buddhist monument in Laos. The large golden stupa in Vientiane is believed to enshrine the breastbone of the Buddha. The pagoda, also known as That Luang, is officially named Pha Chedi Lokajulamani, which translates to "World Precious Sacred Stupa".

PATUXAY MONUMENT

Vientiane's Arc de Triomphe replica is a monumental sight. Officially called 'Victory Gate' and commemorating the Lao who died in pre-revolutionary wars, it was built in the 1960s with cement donated by the USA intended for the construction of a new airport. Climb to the top for panoramic views over Vientiane.

BUDDHA PARK (AKA WAT XIENG KHUAN)

Buddha Park, also known as Wat Xieng Khuan, is a renowned sculpture park featuring over 200 religious statues, including a massive 40-meter-high reclining Buddha. The prime photography spot is atop the giant three-story pumpkin structure. The park's entrance resembles a three-meter-high demon's mouth, leading to a stone ladder and a panoramic view of Xieng Khuan Park. Created in 1958 by monk Luang Pu Bunleua Sulilat, the park showcases both Buddhist and Hindu influences, with sculptures of gods, demons, and animals from both faiths. Notable figures include Indra on a three-headed elephant, a four-armed deity on a horse, and a twelve-faced deity with multiple hands holding intriguing objects. The sculptures impress with their size and intricate details. Adjacent to the Mekong River, a local eatery and café provide a relaxing spot for tourists, offering snacks like papaya salad, fried bananas, and cold Lao beer. The park also features a souvenir shop and restrooms. Location: About 25 kilometers southeast of Vientiane, along the Mekong River.

Dinner on your own account.

Accommodation: As Selected.

Day 05: Vientiane - Departure

(B)

Enjoy your final breakfast at the hotel. Take a walk or get some last-minute souvenirs before you check out at midday. Your guide and driver will meet you to assist with luggage and take you to the airport for your departure flight.

End of Service.