

# ENCHANTING LUSCIOUS LANDSCAPES

## THAILAND – LAOS – CAMBODIA

14 Days / 13 Nights

### Day 01: Arrive Bangkok

(D)

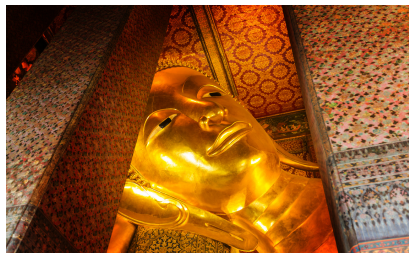
Arrive at the Bangkok airport, and a Tour East travel guide will assist you in being privately transferred by air-conditioned vehicle to your hotel. Check in at the hotel and spend the day at leisure.

In the evening, we pick you up from your hotel for a dinner cruise. The dinner cruise is one of the most famous activities. The cruise takes about 2.5 hours, cruising up and down the Chao Phraya River so that you can enjoy the landmarks of Bangkok at night. Bangkok Dinner Cruise on the Chao Phraya River. Enjoy an exclusive dinner with a special person by cruising along the main river of Thailand, watching the colorful lighting of iconic landmarks such as the Temple of Dawn (Wat Arun), Rama VIII Bridge, The Grand Palace, and ICONSIAM.

Overnight at your selected hotel

### Day 02: Bangkok – Half-Day Sightseeing in the City of Angels

(B)



After breakfast at your hotel, meet with your guide and head out of your hotel for an original half day of sightseeing in the City of Angels using a private air-conditioned vehicle.

Your tour begins at Wat Trimit, renowned for housing the world's largest golden Buddha, which stands at a towering height of five meters and weighs over five and a half tons. Next, you'll journey through the heart of the city's Chinatown to witness its rich cultural diversity before proceeding to Wat Pho. This temple holds the distinction of being the first among the six temples in Thailand classified as the highest grade of first-class royal temples and home to the remarkable 46-meter-long and 15-meter-high reclining Buddha.

Wat Pho also hosts a school of Thai medicine and is renowned as the birthplace of traditional Thai massage, which is still taught and practiced at the temple. Continue to visit the **Grand Palace**. The Royal Grand Palace is the nation's landmark, the most revered royal monument, and the home of the mysterious Emerald Buddha, the most revered Buddha image in Thailand. An appropriate dress is required.

The Grand Palace is one of the most popular destinations and is usually the number-one must-see place in Bangkok. Not surprisingly, it receives millions of tourists annually to visit. Afterward, transfer back to your hotel.

Overnight at your selected hotel

#### Day 03: Bangkok

(B)

Breakfast will be served at the hotel.  
Time will be at leisure.

Overnight at your selected hotel

#### Day 04: Bangkok – Luang Prabang

(B)

Breakfast will be served at the hotel.  
At the indicated time, a private transfer by air-conditioned vehicle with an **English-speaking guide** to the airport will take the flight to Luang Prabang (*flight not included*).

Upon arrival in Luang Prabang, 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.

*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.

Overnight at your selected hotel

Day 05: Luang Prabang – City Tour by Tuk Tuk

(B/L)



Breakfast at your hotel

Explore the city by Tuk Tuk. The Tuk Tuk (a motorized rickshaw) was brought to Southeast Asia in 1934 from Japan and has since become an icon of the region. The classic Tuk Tuk has a sheet-metal roof covering an open frame that rests on three wheels. They're one of the most popular forms of transportation in Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia, and this Southeast Asian emblem is the perfect vehicle for an open-air tour of Luang Prabang.

Depart from the hotel at 8:30 and get on the Tuk Tuk to 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 pick up some snacks for later.

A short walk from the market is **Wat Mai Suwannaphumaham** ("New Monastery"), the **National Museum (Royal Palace)**, and **Hor Phra Bang**. After the museum, travel again by tuk-tuk through more of the picturesque town to **Wat Visounnalath**. Continue to **Heuan Chan Luang Prabang** for a short activity and learn how to make banana leaves and flowers.

Another short tuk-tuk ride along the **Nam Khan River** to **Wat Xieng Thong**. End the day's tour on top of **Mount Phousi**.

Dinner on your own account

Overnight at your selected hotel

## Day 06: Luang Prabang – Pak Ou Caves & Kuang Si Waterfall

(B/L)



Breakfast at your hotel

Travel by boat to Tham Pak Ou Caves and 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.

### 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 Thueng, both boasting miniature Buddhist figures that are mostly made from wood.

### 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.

**ADDON OPTION:** We offer an exciting chance to go behind-the-scenes. You'll hear the unique and moving rescue stories of the bears, meet the bears, help the Bear Care Team prepare their food and enrichment treats, and then watch the bears search them out and gobble them down. By taking part in this unique experience, you'll be contributing directly towards helping care for bears rescued from the illegal wildlife trade.

### 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 a delicious baguette in a beautiful setting.

Dinner on your own account

Overnight at your selected hotel



## Day 07: Luang Prabang, Living Land Farm, and Ban Chan Pottery Village

(B/L)



Breakfast at your hotel

Tours are divided into morning and afternoon half-day segments, with both being led in English by the locals who know the village best. In addition to the pottery, we are able to offer an authentic Lao meal during your tour, whether you choose a morning or afternoon time. We promise a truly Lao, laid-back experience, and we hope you leave feeling like friends and family!

### Morning Programs

#### **Ancient Lao pottery making**

For over 400 years, the families of our village have been making pottery. The ancient kings of Laos chose this village for their pottery-making skills, and it became the central way of life for the people. At first, the pots were used to ferment fish and hold water, but now families produce a large range of items, from beautifully decorated planters to terracotta roof tiles, making them almost entirely by hand using the same techniques passed down through the centuries. We have started our company in part to help preserve this amazing history, as it's slowly fading away with only six families still preserving these techniques.

On your tour, you not only get a behind-the-scenes look at these ancient techniques but will also have the opportunity to get hands-on with the clay yourself. Our skilled pottery makers will help guide you as you experience, up close and personal, a truly Lao cultural activity. How many people can say they've made Lao pottery using ancient techniques? You will!

#### **Experience a Traditional Lao Village**

Most Lao people live in villages. Luang Prabang, though small compared to many cities in other countries, is considered a major population center by the people in Laos. Spending all of your time in cities like this means you might miss out on some of the most extraordinary parts of Laos.

Located just across the river from Luang Prabang, our village provides a convenient and authentic look into what most of Laos looks like. We will make sure you get to see Laos the way Lao people do! We have made sure that you will have access to modern amenities such as western restrooms and clean drinking water, but we guarantee you'll walk away with a different outlook on the world!

### Eat delicious Lao food.

One of the highlights of Laos is the wonderfully delicious Lao food, cooked (as always) with lots of love. If you decide to take our half-day tour, we will finish up our tour with traditional Lao food cooked by our family! All the ingredients come from local sources, and if the season is right, they might even come from our very own organic garden (just ask!). We will make sure you get a sampling of all of Luang Prabang's traditional foods, like khaipan (fried river weed), grilled fish, eggplant dipping sauce, and spicy papaya salad. We promise you that your stomach will thank us!

### Afternoon Programs

Experience for yourself the process of making rice—from seed to table—on this half-day 'Rice is Life' interactive experience. We go explore the life cycle of rice with this superb day activity suitable for families and individuals. Rice is the center of life in Laos, and we make it your focal point for the day.

#### Half-Day Rice is a Life Interaction Program

You can buy instant boxed rice from either Uncle Ben's or some other corporate brand, microwave it for two minutes, and it's ready to eat. But do you know what it takes to cultivate, harvest, and prepare rice before it is ready to eat? It takes a lot more than two minutes in the microwave. This unique half-day activity invites you to an in-depth and hands-on learning experience where you will participate in 14 steps of the rice cycle on the Living Lands community farm.

Rice is the ultimate foundation of everyday life in Asia, yet it is still a mystery for many visitors. On this exceptional tour, you will be a rice farmer for a day. Learning how to select the seeds, plant, and plough with the help of the farm's water buffalo and every other step until the last one... eating!

The Living Lands Farm, a community enterprise just outside of Luang Prabang, maintains educational programs and professional organic farming right next to village rice paddies. Only small groups are able to join the interactive rice farming experience, which actively benefits locals and the community by maintaining their crafts in their traditional form. You will see and learn about bamboo weaving, tool and trap making, gardening, and even blacksmithing.

Dinner on your own account

Overnight at your selected hotel

## Day 08: Luang Prabang – Phnom Penh

(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 to Phnom Penh (*flight not included*).

Welcome to Phnom Penh. 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.

Lunch and dinner are on your own account.

### PHNOM PENH

Phnom Penh is Cambodia's busy capital and sits where the Mekong and Tonlé Sap rivers meet. It was a hub for both the Khmer Empire and French colonialists. On its walkable riverfront, lined with parks, trendy restaurants, and bars, are the ornate Royal Palace, the Silver Pagoda, and the National Museum, which displays artifacts from around Cambodia. Despite its checkered past, PP is in the midst of rapid change and growth, although it continues to exude a sort of provincial charm and tranquility with French colonial mansions and tree-lined boulevards amidst monumental Angkorian architecture. Definitely eclectic and alluring, it's a capital worth seeing.

*Notice: Revealing clothes such as shorts and skirts above the knees and bare shoulders are prohibited in sacred places and temples. On religious Buddhist dates, the Top Tower (Level 3) of the Angkor Wat temple is closed.*

Overnight at your selected hotel

## Day 09: Phnom Penh

(B)



A discovery tour of Phnom Penh. At 8:00 a.m., you will be met by your driver and guide. Gain insight into the recent dark history of Cambodia at the **Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum**, a former school converted into a detention center during the Khmer Rouge.

Visit the equally harrowing Killing Fields of **Choeung Ek**. These are tough visits, but important for learning about the country's history.

Afternoon, visit the Russian Market, the largest in Cambodia, where everything is sold, from carvings to jewelry, clothes, and souvenirs. Then came Wat Phnom, a beautiful hilltop temple with manicured gardens, followed by the Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda, named for the 5,000 silver tiles that cover the pagoda's floor, known for its collection of gold, silver, crystal, and bronze Buddha statues. Dinner on your own account

Lunch and dinner are on your own account.

Overnight at your selected hotel

#### Day 10: Phnom Penh

(B)

In the morning, have breakfast; today is free and easy at your own leisure!

Lunch and dinner are on your own account.

Overnight at your selected hotel

#### Day 11: Phnom Penh – Siem Reap

(B)

Breakfast at the hotel.

**Your driver** will meet you at the hotel lobby and transfer you to the bus station or airport for departure to Siem Reap City. By bus, it takes approximately 6 hours, and by flight, it takes 1 hour.

Upon arrival at Siem Reap City, meet up with **our guide** and transfer to your hotel for check-in. *Please note that the standard check-in time is 14:00.*

Lunch and dinner on your own account

#### SIEM REAP

Siem Reap is located in northwest Cambodia and is the closest city to the world-famous, must-see temples of Angkor. The provincial capital is also called Siem Reap and is located in the south of the province on the shores of Tonle Sap Lake, the greatest sweet water reserve in all of Southeast Asia. It's a laid-back, lovely place to stay while touring the temples and offers the best of both worlds between observing Cambodian life and enjoying the amenities of modern services and entertainment. Although the temples are the main 'draw' in this area, there is much more to experience by traveling a little further in this region.

Overnight at your selected hotel



## Day 12: Siem Reap

(B)



At 8:00 a.m., we'll pick you up from your hotel for the day's tour. Your first visit is the **South Gate**, with its huge statues depicting the churning of the ocean of milk. You will also see the ancient capital of **Angkor Thom**, built in the late 12th century, before we head onwards to Bayon Temple, which is unique for its 54 towers decorated with over 200 smiling faces of Avolokitesvara. Baphuon is like an artificial mountain that recently re-opened after years of restoration.

Following, you may visit the Royal Enclosure, the Elephants Terrace, and the Terrace of the Leper King. Then continue to the popular temple of **Ta Prohm**, which is the modern name of the temple at Angkor, built in the late 12th and early 13th centuries. However, it is probably more famous for being the location where they filmed the Tomb Raider movie.

Afternoon, we continue to the magnificent **Angkor Wat Temple**, Angkor Park's most revered temple and the largest religious monument in the world. Inside the temple, the walls are covered with stone carvings and bas-reliefs, which are absolutely breathtaking. Your guide will explain the stories in exquisite detail and provide you with ample time to explore the inner and outer grounds of the temple.

Lunch and dinner on your own account.

Overnight at your selected hotel

## Day 13: Siem Reap

(B)



Your day of past and present begins with an 8:30 a.m. pick-up at your hotel. The first half of the day explores two highlight temples, **Banteay Samre** and **Banteay Srei**. Banteay Samre, built under Suryavarman II and Yasovarman II in the early 12th century, is a Hindu temple in the Angkor Wat style. We follow Banteay Samre with Banteay Srei, one of Angkor's most beautiful temples. Built largely of red sandstone, this gem of a temple boasts a pink color and some of the most exquisite depictions.

When it's time for a temple break, enjoy lunch (guest's own account).

Afternoon, free and easy at your own leisure!

Lunch and dinner on your own account.

Overnight at your selected hotel

#### Day 14: Departure Siem Reap

(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. *(flight not included)*.

End of Service.