

LAOS LUSCIOUS LANDSCAPES

Luang Prabang

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.

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

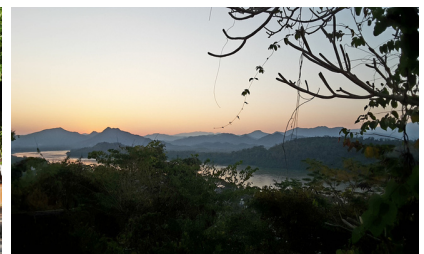
LUANG PRABANG

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 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.

Accommodation: As Selected.

Day 03: 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.

Accommodation: As Selected.

Day 04: Luang Prabang – Living Land Farm & 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

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

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.

ITINERARY

HALF-DAY RICE IS 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.

Accommodation: As Selected.

Day 05: Luang Prabang – 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.