



ITINERARY

Laos - North to the South in 12 Days ~ Gorgeous Private Tour

Day 1: Arrival in Luang Prabang

Welcome to **Luang Prabang**. On arrival, you will be met at the airport, welcomed by your tour guide and taken to your hotel in this gorgeous town. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage town, Luang Prabang is a special place to visit and has much to offer from gilded wats (temples) to outstanding natural beauty, delicious cuisine and more.

The night markets in Luang Prabang are exceptional and we recommend a visit, they are within walking distance from your hotel (all options) and you can visit them at your leisure.

Overnight in Luang Prabang: Villa Chitdara - Standard Room (Standard); Villa Santi Hotel - Deluxe Room (Deluxe); Satri House - Deluxe Room (Super Deluxe)

Day 2: Luang Prabang City Tour and the Pak Ou Caves

After breakfast head off on a sightseeing tour of this gorgeous city - possibly the best preserved traditional city in Southeast Asia. Visit the former **King's Palace** along with various wats - **Wat Xieng Thong, Wat Visoun** and the shrine of **Wat Aham**. What is a wat you may ask? They are temples or Buddhist monasteries.

Take a morning cruise along the Mekong about two hours upstream from the centre of Luang Prabang and discover the numerous Buddha images at Pak Ou Caves.

Pak Ou caves overlook the Mekong River and are a group of caves that are home to thousands of Buddha images, which range from mere centimetres to two meters in height. The caves are a short distance from **the village of Ban Xang Hai**. Stop here to learn about LauLao (Lao whisky) and LauHai (Lao wine), before continuing down the Mekong back to Luang Prabang.

Later in the day, in time for sunset, climb up to the top of Phu Si Mountain - home to a gilded stupa and incredible sunset views of the city and Mekong River (please note: there are around 329 steps to reach the top).

On your return, in the evening, ready for sunset, climb up to the top of Phu Si Mountain for an enjoyable exploration of the sacred, gilded stupa. From this awe-inspiring vista, take in the beautiful sunset view of the city and the Mekong River.

Overnight in Luang Prabang: Villa Chitdara - Standard Room (Standard); Villa Santi Hotel - Deluxe Room (Deluxe); Satri House - Deluxe Room (Super Deluxe)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 3: Local markets, local villages and the Kuang Si Waterfalls

This morning you may choose to wake up early and participate in the daily early morning ritual of saffron-clad monks with their black alms-giving bowls receiving offerings from the local people, including the ubiquitous sticky rice.

Please Note: It is custom to ensure shoulders, chest and legs are covered so out of respect please have suitable clothing. If you choose to go, but prefer not to make an offering, that is fine but it is requested that you stand back and observe the ritual in silence.

From here you can visit the **Phosi Market** where you will see diverse offerings such as dried buffalo skin and local tea among the chickens, vegetables and hill-tribe weavings. Laos is also known for its traditional crafts, and today you will visit the Ban Ouay, Hmong Hill tribe and others in the Khmu village. Continue on to the beautiful **Kuang Si Waterfall** with its turquoise waters and cascading pools. You can take a swim or walk along the forest paths. This is a highlight for many in Luang Prabang. Return to the city and take a short drive to **Ban Xang Khong** and **Ban Xienglek** well known for its hand-made Jute Sar paper.

Overnight in Luang Prabang: Villa Chitdara - Standard Room (Standard); Villa Santi Hotel - Deluxe Room (Deluxe); Satri House - Deluxe Room (Super Deluxe)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 4: Relax and enjoy Luang Prabang at your own pace

Enjoy a day at leisure in Luang Prabang.

Perhaps take a stroll along the Nam Khan and Mekong River, or sit back and relax whilst enjoying a Lao coffee and some street food. If you feel a little more active you could hire a bicycle or tuk tuk and visit the local temples and villages nearby on your own.

Overnight in Luang Prabang: Villa Chitdara - Standard Room (Standard); Villa Santi Hotel - Deluxe Room (Deluxe); Satri House - Deluxe Room (Super Deluxe)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 5: Travel to Vang Vieng enjoying spectacular scenery

After breakfast at the hotel, you will be collected for the drive to **Vang Vieng**. The scenery of limestone karsts, steep terraced rice fields and hill villages on the drive is spectacular. There will be plenty of opportunities to take photos and stop at a few villages along the way. The roads are well paved and the drive takes around 4-5 hours by car. Arrive Vang Vieng in the afternoon where you will be taken to your hotel.

Overnight in Vang Vieng: Thavounsouk Hotel & Resort - Double room (Standard); Silver Naga - Deluxe (Deluxe); Riverside Boutique – Deluxe Room (Super Deluxe)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 6: Visit the famous limestone caves of Tham Phu Kham and meet villagers

After breakfast take a tractor ride through paddy fields to the **Tham Phu Kham caves** - the country's beautiful and famous limestone caverns surrounded by forest. Along the way, you will meet local villagers and get an insight into daily life in Laos.

There is a small natural pool in front of the caves where you can swim and here you can have a picnic lunch. After spending the day at the caves and the surrounding area, return to Vang Vieng. En route, pass through many ethnic minority villages - including Hmong, Souay and Tai Dam people.

Overnight in Vang Vieng: Thavounsouk Hotel & Resort - Double room (Standard); Silver Naga - Deluxe (Deluxe); Riverside Boutique – Deluxe Room (Super Deluxe)

Meals included: Breakfast and picnic lunch

Day 7: Travel to Vientiane and visit the Thalat markets

Enjoy breakfast and relax at the hotel. In the afternoon drive to **Vientiane** (about 3 hours). On the way pass through spectacular countryside in the mountainous region and visit the busy and colourful market of Thalat where various hill tribes come to trade goods and buy provisions. On arrival in Vientiane you will be taken to your hotel.

Overnight in Vientiane: Family Boutique – Deluxe Room (Standard); S Park Design - Deluxe Room (Deluxe); Crowne Plaza Vientiane - Deluxe Room (Super Deluxe)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 8: Discover the city of Vientiane

Today you have a full day to explore **Vientiane**, the charming and fascinating capital of Laos - one of the classic Indo-Chinese cities with a mix of Lao, Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese, French, American and Soviet influences.

Visit the National Museum, Wat Sisaket - the city's oldest surviving temple with thousands of silver and porcelain images and Haw Phra Kaeo - a large temple is built to house the famed Emerald Buddha in courtyards filled with frangipani trees.

In the afternoon stop at the older part of Morning market and visit Pha That Luang - a giant golden stupa. Then climb the Arc De Triomphe of Laos, Patuxai. The massive arch has a beautiful mosaic tiled ceiling and from the top you get a wonderful view of the city.

Overnight in Vientiane: Family Boutique – Deluxe Room (Standard); S Park Design - Deluxe Room (Deluxe); Crowne Plaza Vientiane - Deluxe Room (Super Deluxe)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 9: Fly to Pakse and on to the Bolaven Plateau

Early morning you will be collected from your hotel and taken to the airport in time for your flight to **Pakse**. On arrival you will be met at the airport and your driver will take you to the **Bolaven Plateau** - an area of highlands situated to the east of Pakse and home to various hill tribes, such as Lavens from which the region gets its name.

Stop at **Tad Lo**, a series of three waterfalls and continue to **Tad Yuang & Tad Fane Waterfalls**, stopping en-route to visit a coffee and/or tea plantation.

Overnight in Bolaven: Tad Lo Lodge – Standard Room (Standard); Sinouk Coffee Resort – Superior Room (Deluxe); Sinouk Coffee Resort – Superior Room (Super Deluxe)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 10: The temples of Vat Phou and on to Don Det Island

This morning, leave Bolaven and head to the **Champasak province** to visit the fascinating UNESCO protected pre-Angkorian ruins of **Vat Phou** (also known as Wat Phu)- one of Southeast Asia's most dramatically situated temples. They are perched at the base of Mount Phu Kao and date back to the 5th century.

After lunch drive to **Nakasung Pier** for a short boat trip to **Don Det Island**, one of the islands of **Si Phan Don** (4000 islands). Life here is relaxed, leisurely and moves at a gentle pace.

Overnight on Don Det Island: Little Eden - Deluxe Room (Standard, Deluxe and Super Deluxe)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 11: Cruise the Mekong around Khong Island and Si Phan Don (4000 Islands)

After breakfast explore the islands of **Don Det and Don Khone** with a boat trip along the Mekong river - watch the local children playing and see the fishermen go about their daily lives. Take a tuk tuk to visit these two islands, which are linked by a bridge. Visit **Ban Khone fishing village** - where you can explore the ruins of the **French railway tracks** and the beautiful **Liphi Waterfall**. Enjoy the natural beauty and tranquillity of the islands.

In the afternoon board the boat again and visit the **Cambodian border** - home to the famous **Irrawaddy dolphins**. If you are lucky, you will catch them playing and swimming on the river. Later you will be transferred back to your hotel with the remainder of day free at your leisure. Meals on your own. Overnight at the hotel.

Overnight on Don Det Island: Little Eden - Deluxe Room (Standard, Deluxe and Super Deluxe)

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 12: Time to go home or onto your next adventure

Today the tour ends. After breakfast you will be taken to the pier to catch your boat back to the mainland. On arrival at the pier your driver will meet you and take you to the airport in time for your flight home, or if you would like to extend your time in Laos, we can arrange this for you.

Meals included: Breakfast