

## Essential Laos

Discover the capital of Laos, Vientiane, and the world heritage town of Luang Prabang in this 7-day overview



### Day 1 - Arrive Laos

Your tour begins in **Luang Prabang**, northern Laos. On arrival at Luang Prabang airport, you'll be met by your guide and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure. Explore the town, with its lively night market and many restaurants, or just rest off the jet lag!

*NB. There are daily flights (morning and afternoon) from the capital, Vientiane, to Luang Prabang. If arriving into Laos in the evening, it may be necessary to arrange for a night in Vientiane at the start of the tour.*

### Day 2 - Explore Luang Prabang

We recommend waking early this morning to watch the alms ceremony, a daily ritual as ancient as some of Luang Prabang's temples. Otherwise, enjoy a leisurely breakfast; your tour doesn't begin until late morning.

#### ***Your Financial Protection***

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

When you're ready, set off with your guide on a tour of Luang Prabang, taking in the former **Royal Palace**, a unique blend of French and Lao design that dates back to 1904; the **Wat Sen** temple, notable for its giant standing Buddha; and **Wat Xieng Thong**, perhaps the most famous temple in all of Laos, built in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, during which time Luang Prabang served as the capital of the Lao kingdom.

In the afternoon, leave Luang Prabang to visit a nearby weaving village. Explore the village and learn more about the local silk craft, before returning to town in time to catch the sunset view from **Mount Phousi**.

Luang Prabang's most prominent landmark, Mount Phousi is a 100m high stupa-crowned hill that dominates the town skyline. It's a short, steep climb to the top, but worth it for the marvellous view. You can guarantee that you won't be the only person making the climb. Phousi is always busy with travellers and locals alike—in the evening, it can often feel like the whole of Luang Prabang has gathered together to watch the sunset!



### **Day 3 - Mekong River Cruise; Pak Ou Caves**

An early start this morning, as you embark on a boat cruise on the Mekong River. Your destination is the **Pak Ou Caves**, but you'll also stop along the way at a local weaving village and at the royal temple of **Wat Long Khun**.







Small, cramped, and barely visible at a distance, the Pak Ou Caves appear unremarkable as you approach them. That is, until you step inside and see the many hundreds of Buddha images that line the cavern walls, many of them centuries old. Look closely and you'll notice that many are also damaged, for the caves are not a shrine as is sometimes assumed, but rather a repository for old Buddha images no longer fit for the altar due to damage or age. The statues have not been entirely abandoned, however. Each New Year they are removed from the caves and bathed in the Mekong in a ceremony that attracts boatloads of pilgrims!

After exploring the caves, walk to a nearby village for lunch. While here, you might like to sample the local rice whisky, or "lao lao", a specialty of the region, before returning to **Luang Prabang** by car.

#### **Day 4 - Luang Prabang sightseeing**

This morning visit the **Phousi Market**, where you'll find products such as dried buffalo skin, locally-grown tea and saltpetre, among the poultry, fruit, and fabrics that are the stuff of daily life in Laos. Laos is of course famous for its crafts, so this morning you'll also have the chance to visit a number of Khmu and Hmong villages – at Ban Ouay, Laoloum and Ban Thapene – where you can explore workshops and learn more about the local economy. Then, later in the morning, continue to the beautiful **Khouang Si Falls** for a dip in the water followed by a walk in the forest.



Returning to town, stop at **Wat Siphoutthabat Thipp Haram**, which offers a high vantage point from which to watch the sunset. The school, which doesn't attract the bustle of Mount Phousi, offers a superb vantage point for sunset views of the Mekong River.



### Day 5 - Luang Prabang to Vientiane

Morning flight to **Vientiane**, where you'll be met on arrival by your guide and transferred to your hotel in the city centre.

After you've checked into your hotel, lunched and rested, enjoy a guided tour of the **Buddha Park**, a collection of hundreds of Buddhist and Hindu statues and sculptures set in a beautiful location on the banks of the Mekong, just outside the capital. Many of the statues at the Buddha Park are over 500 years old, and much larger in scale than those at the Pak Ou Caves. Collectively, they form a stunning spectacle.

Watch the sun set over the park before returning to your hotel in Vientiane.

### Day 6 - Vientiane City tour

Begin your tour of Vientiane with the capital's major religious sites, including the former royal temple **Wat Phra Kaew**—once home to the Emerald Buddha that now resides in the temple of the same name in Bangkok—and the city's oldest surviving temple, **Wat Si Saket**.



In the afternoon visit Laos' national monument and holiest site, **Pha That Luang**, a huge gold-plated stupa located in the centre of town, and the **Patuxai**, or independence monument.



**Day 7 - Departure**

Free until you transfer to Vientiane airport for your return flight home.

**Price Guide:**

*The cost of this itinerary is from **£1,135 per person**, based on twin/double accommodation. For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).*

**Includes:**

- Shared accommodation (B&B basis)
- Internal flights
- Private transportation throughout
- All entrance fees
- Activities mentioned in itinerary
- Experienced regional guides

**Excludes:**

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Visas
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips
- Lunch and dinner to own account unless stated otherwise in itinerary

