

Scenic Laos

Spend a night in a tree house in Bokeo Nature Reserve, trek the Luang Nam Tha hills, and meet the tribes of Muang La in this 12-day holiday to the remote north of Laos.



Day 1 – Arrive Laos

Your tour begins in **Luang Prabang**, northern Laos, where you'll be met on arrival by your guide and transferred to your hotel in the town centre, the **Villa Santi**. The rest of the day is at leisure. Take the time to explore the town, with its lively night market and numerous restaurants, or just rest off your 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. Many also travel to Luang Prabang from Thailand via the Mekong River (overnight cruise).

Day 2 – Luang Prabang to Huay Xai

An early start this morning as you set out from Luang Prabang towards the town of **Huay Xai**, a drive of approx. 8-10 hours through the mountains, with plenty of time for stops en route.

Your ultimate destination is not Huay Xai itself but the surrounding wilderness of the **Bokeo Nature Reserve**.

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.

On arrival you'll check in at the Gibbon Experience, though tonight you stay in a hotel outside Huay Xai, the **Riverside Huay Xai**—your jungle experience begins tomorrow!

Day 3 – Gibbon Experience

A conservation project aimed at protecting the local reserve and its dwindling population of black-crested gibbon, the **Gibbon Experience** provides one of the best, most eco-friendly adventures to be had in Laos. Guests here spend a night or two in the trees, exploring the reserve by zip-wires and sleeping in two magnificent tree houses located high in the canopy (30-40m from the ground). The tree houses are sturdy and spacious; each tree house is shared, with the sleeping areas separated by netting to offer some privacy. Private tree houses are not available. They offer uninterrupted views of the forest (wildlife spotting from the comfort of your tree house is a delight). Everything is linked by a complex network of zip wires, with even your meals arriving via the wires!



The Gibbon Experience is well-suited to families (though beware the heights – children have to use the high zip wires in tandem with the forest guides), but it isn't an adventure camp, and wildlife enthusiasts will also find the experience more than rewarding. Bokeo is one of Laos' best wildlife reserves, home to leopard, tiger, black bear, and of course the elusive gibbon. Sightings are far from guaranteed, however, and you shouldn't expect a safari experience. Many of the animals have been hunted close to extinction, and it's only in recent years that this trend has begun to reverse, in part thanks to the aid of ecotourism projects like the Gibbon Experience.

Day 4 – Gibbon Experience

Enjoy a second day of activities at the Gibbon Experience, with options for trekking, birding tours, and waterfall visits.



In the evening return to the relative normalcy of your hotel in Huay Xai.

Day 5 – Huay Xai to Luang Nam Tha

Depart Huay Xai for the province of **Luang Nam Tha**, situated in the north of Laos on the border with China and Myanmar. This most remote region of Laos is a land of rugged mountains and dense woodland. It's also one of the most diverse regions of the country, home to over 20 different tribal groups.

This evening you stay in **Phou Lu III**, a comfortable eco-lodge in Luang Nam Tha town, on the banks of the Nam Tha River. The regional capital, Luang Nam Tha is a small town with an attractive old quarter, and is popular as a starting point for treks into the surrounding mountains. It's a bit of an outpost, located a short distance from the Chinese border, and hasn't developed much of an infrastructure for tourists, but it's a good base for exploring the surrounding region.



Day 6 – Luang Nam Tha

This morning you'll have the chance to explore some of the different villages surrounding Luang Nam Tha and learn about the varied hill peoples that populate them, including the Akha, Tai Lue, and Yao. As the villages are close to town you'll travel on foot and by tuk tuk. The trekking is easy and takes you through some beautiful hill terrain and farmland, with a picnic lunch along the way. While wandering the villages you'll have plenty of time to meet with the locals, buy crafts, and learn more about life in this remote region, which receives few visitors.

Return to your lodge in Luang Nam Tha late afternoon. Rest of day at leisure.



Day 7 – Luang Nam Tha to Muang La

Depart Luang Nam Tha this morning and drive to **Muang La Resort** (3-4 hours), arriving midday.



Muang La is one of Laos' best-kept secrets, a lovely retreat hidden away in a peaceful valley in the remote north of the country. Spend the afternoon exploring the nearby village of **Muang La** and the surrounding countryside, before returning to the lodge for dinner.

Day 8 - Muang La

A fascinating day spent exploring the hills by 4x4 and in meeting with some of the local tribes, including the Ikho and Hmong. The track you will use is superb and offers an incredible climb up to 1,000m where there is a memorable viewpoint.

The Ikho, originally from Yunnan and Tibet, are among the most isolated communities in Laos, their culture far removed from that of the majority Lao population. Notably, their belief system is Animist, not Buddhist. The Hmong share many characteristics with the Ikho, having also migrated to Laos from Tibet, though they are much more numerous (8% of the population). They practice Ua Dab, or Hmong shamanism, but, more thoroughly integrated into Lao society than the Ikho, many are also converts to Buddhism.



Spend the morning exploring a remote Ikho village, before stopping for lunch at a high spot overlooking the valley. Afterwards, walk for an hour to the Hmong village of Ban Tauser, with wonderful views en route. Return to Muang La at the end of the day.

Day 9 - Muang La to Luang Prabang

Set off early for Luang Prabang arriving in the afternoon. After checking back into your hotel, the Villa Santi, the rest of the evening is at leisure. You're spoilt for choice when it comes to dining out in Luang Prabang. The best restaurants are on the riverside, while the night market has a number of stalls selling great street food (do be careful to choose food that you can see being cooked).



Day 10 – Luang Prabang

An optional early start gives you the opportunity to participate in the morning alms-giving ceremony, which sees a procession of saffron-robed monks pass through the centre of Luang Prabang collecting alms (sticky rice, ubiquitously) from the more devout residents, in a daily ritual as ancient as some of the town's temples.

After breakfast, take a tour of Luang Prabang, beginning with the former **Royal Palace**. The Palace has been converted into a National Museum and houses a collection of artifacts dating from the days of the earliest kings of Laos right through to the last sovereign, Sisavang Vatthana. Continue with a visit the magnificent **Wat Xieng Thong**, perhaps the most impressive temple in Laos, located at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers, and famous for its intricate gilded stuccoes and coloured glass mosaics.

Time-allowing, explore some of the other notable landmarks of Luang Prabang, including the impressive stupa of **Wat Visoun** and the shrine of **Wat Aham**.

In the afternoon leave town for the beautiful **Khuang Si Falls**, where you can take a refreshing dip in the large turquoise pools or explore the forest trails. Return to Luang Prabang in the afternoon.

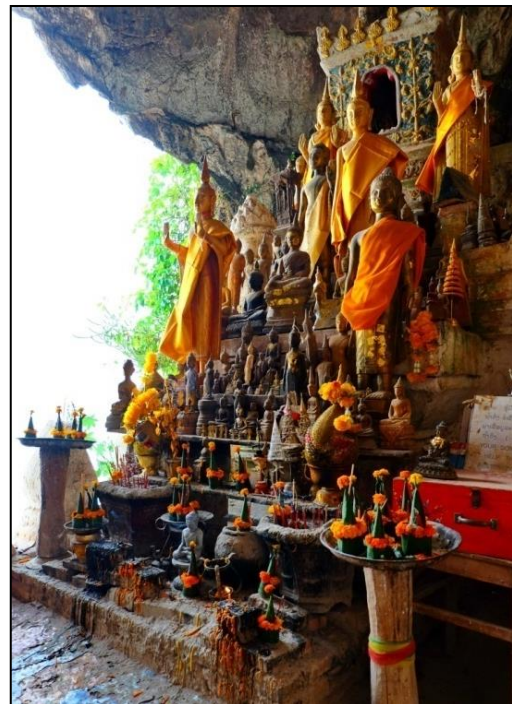
Day 11 – Luang Prabang

Take a full-day boat trip on the mighty Mekong River to explore local villages at **Ban Xiengmene** and **Ban Chan**, where you can sample a local specialty, rice whisky. Continue to the royal temple at **Wat Long Khoun**, which once belonged to the royal family, and the nearby **Sackarine Caves**, before continuing to the **Pak Ou Caves**. The Pak Ou Caves are a famous landmark, filled with hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Buddha statues, which have been donated by pilgrims from across the country.

After exploring the caves cross the Mekong River at **Ban Ou** for lunch at a local restaurant. Return by road to Luang Prabang.

Day 12 – Departure

Free until you transfer to the airport for your flight to Vientiane and connecting flight home.



Price Guide:

The cost of this itinerary is from **£2,530 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:

- Twin/double accommodation (B&B basis)
- Lunch on days 3, 4, 6 and 8. Otherwise to own account.
- Dinner on days 3, 7, 8. Otherwise to own account.
- 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

