

Beautiful Laos

8 days | Luang Prabang to Pakse



Explore the splendors of this intriguing country and discover the charm of Luang Prabang, uncover the incredible Pak Ou Caves, visit the unassuming capital of Vientiane and sail the Mekong Delta on this private tour.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Luang Prabang - The UNESCO Listed former royal capital, National Museum, beautiful Wat Xieng Thong Temple and superb sunset views from Mount Phou Sy
- Pak Ou Caves - Crammed with Buddha statues and Khouang Si Waterfall
- An introduction to Laos cuisine, shopping for ingredients in local markets and sampling the results
- Vientiane - The laid back capital, Wat Sisaket, Wat Prakeo, the COPE Centre, That Luang Stupa, Patuxay Monument and the Buddha Park
- Pakse - Provincial capital of Champasack where the Mekong and Sedon Rivers meet, Wat Phou, Khong Island - 1 of the 4000 islands dotting the Mekong
- Khone Phapeng - The largest waterfall in South East Asia

What's Included

- Breakfast daily, 1 lunch and 1 dinner
- 7 nights STANDARD hotels. SUPERIOR and DELUXE hotel options are also available upon request. Accommodation rating – See Trip Notes for details
- Private boat trips on the Mekong, in Luang Prabang and Pakse
- 2 economy class flights: Luang Prabang to Vientiane and Vientiane to Pakse
- Touring and excursions as per itinerary
- Entrance fees to all included sights
- Local English speaking specialist guides for all sightseeing
- An airport arrival transfer day 1 and a departure transfer day 8
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private air-conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Tipping - An entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Luang Prabang

Welcome to Laos. Upon arrival at Luang Prabang airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Spend the rest of the day at leisure. **Overnight - Luang Prabang**

Day 2 : City tour & Khouang Si waterfall



This morning take in the highlights of enchanting Luang Prabang on a city tour. Visit the impressive stupa of Wat Visoun, the former Royal Palace which is now a National Museum and the sobering UXO Centre, where you will learn about Laos' Hidden War. In the afternoon travel to the beautiful Khouang Si waterfall, where you can swim in the turquoise pools, and visit the Sun Bear Reserve, a conservation centre that rescues animals from the wildlife trade. This evening explore the Luang Prabang Night Market before dinner at a local home, accompanied by a traditional Baci ceremony. **Overnight - Luang Prabang (B, D)**

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Day 3 : Free day in Luang Prabang



Today is free for you to spend at leisure in Luang Prabang or choose one of the optional excursions

Alternatively there is an optional excursion to the Pak Ou Caves on a Mekong boat trip. Within the caves are thousands of tiny gilded statues of Buddha that were left by pilgrims and worshipped for centuries. Then stop at the village of Ban Xangkhong, known for its hand woven silk and traditional Saa Paper making. Alternatively, visit a local farm in Luang Prabang, to learn about the production of rice, using water buffalo for and other traditional processes. **Overnight - Luang Prabang (B)**

Day 4 : Vientiane - Laos Cuisine

Today's unique experience is a "Monks life encounter". Buddhism is the basis of Laos culture and temples play an important role in Laotian daily life. The daily alms-giving ritual is a must-see for any visitor to Luang Prabang, a "Monks life encounter" offers the opportunity to participate in this practice in an authentic manner at a local temple. We will experience how typical Laos dishes like Laap Laos, Olam soup and papaya salad are cooked and then offer food to a local temple. We will receive a blessing where the monks chant for us as a part of this traditional ritual and later, join an open talk on Buddhism in Laos with monks, or enjoy lunch with the food you just cooked, according to your preference. This afternoon we visit Wat Xieng Thong, dating back to the 16th century, it is considered the most beautiful temple in Luang Prabang. Our final stop of the day is at the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, giving us an insight into Laos' ethnic minority groups. We then transfer

to the airport for our flight to Vientiane. **Overnight - Vientiane (B, L)**

Day 5 : Vientiane - City Tour



Today we visit the COPE educational centre, a compelling centre that teaches us about Laos' Hidden War and the aid that is being given to help civilian victims of conflict. Afterwards we continue on to the unique Buddha Park or Xiang Khouan as it's known locally, the park is filled with hundreds of Buddhist and Hindu statues creating a peaceful atmosphere.

Later, take a tour of Vientiane visiting Wat Sisaket, one of the oldest temples and home to thousands of miniature Buddha statues, and also visiting the former royal temple of Wat Prakeo. En route to Lao's national icon, That Luang Stupa, we pass the Patuxay Monument, known as Vientiane's own Arc de Triomphe. **Overnight - Vientiane (B)**

Day 6 : Khong Island



Today fly to Pakse, the laid back provincial capital of Champasack and drive to the ancient temple of Wat Phou, one of the oldest archaeological sites in Laos. Then enjoy the beautiful lush scenery as you take a small boat across the Mekong to Khong Island. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure exploring this sedate and picturesque island and its villages on foot or by bike. **Overnight - Don Khong Island (B)**

Day 7 : 4000 Islands Boat Trip



Set sail this morning on a scenic 4000 Islands boat trip, where you may spot the rare Irrawaddy Mekong Dolphin! After our boat ride we visit the famous waterfalls of Khone Phapeng, the largest waterfalls in South East Asia and also known as the Niagara of the east. **Overnight - Pakse (B)**

Day 8 : Pakse

Explore Pakse town your own way. Arrangements come to an end after breakfast and onward departure transfer to the airport.(B)

Accommodation ratings

On our Private trips, you can often choose your style of accommodation. The price quoted on our website is reflective of the included accommodation, please see the "included" section on the first page of this document for details. Should you opt for an alternative hotel category, this will be confirmed in writing with the respective price on your invoice.

For further details about the indicative hotels, please see the "hotels" tab on our website. Here we rank hotel's in their respective country (REGIONAL CATEGORY) - but we also tell you how it ranks by Western standards (OUR CATEGORY).

STANDARD - Equates to a Western 3-star standard, always featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant.

SUPERIOR - Equates to a Western 4-star standard, featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant and often a swimming pool and/or a fitness centre.

DELUXE - Equates to a Western 5-star standard, usually featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and

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fitness centre and an array of amenities, excellent service and customer care.

LUXURY - Equates to a Western 5-star plus standard - the creme de la creme. Featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, this accommodation is a cut above the rest. Sheer opulence!

What to pack

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your holiday.

- Lightweight cotton garments. Ladies may need to have their shoulders and legs (to below the knee) covered when visiting certain sites, so please pack accordingly
- Comfortable walking shoes in addition to flip flops/thongs
- DEET based mosquito repellent and antihistamine cream
- Electrical adaptors. A universal adaptor is best!
- Lightweight, fold up raincoat/poncho/umbrella
- Your Travel Voucher and two spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swimming costume and torch

Tipping

Tipping is an essential part of the culture. For a job well done, we would suggest for your tour guide: USD\$3-6 per traveller, for each day of sightseeing.

For your driver and On The Go Representative we'd recommend USD\$2-3 per traveller for each day of service. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Laos Country Guide

Welcome to Laos - Arrival transfer

A complimentary airport arrival transfer is provided on all Signature tours, Private Tours

and Short Stays if you are arriving on day 1 or you have booked pre tour accommodation with us.

Arrive into Laos at Wattay International Airport, attend to immigration by completing an immigration form and submitting your photograph and visa fee, then collect your luggage and proceed to the arrivals hall. As you enter the arrivals hall, look for our On The Go representative. He/she will be holding a prominent On The Go Tours logo signboard. After meeting you will be escorted to our awaiting transportation and transferred to our tour start hotel.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes) or your flight is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher.

Please note: If you are arriving prior to 9am on day 1 (essentially on a flight that arrives very, very early in the morning) you will need to purchase a night of pre-tour accommodation to save you waiting until standard hotel check in time, which is generally 2pm.

Visas & passports

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book your touring services.

British, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, South African and USA passport holders are able to obtain a 30 day tourist visa upon arrival to Laos at major airports and border crossings including Wattay International Airport in Vientiane (the entry point for all our tours in Laos), Luang Prabang International Airport and at the Friendship Bridge if coming from Thailand.

At each of these entry points you must submit a visa application form and two passport size photograph. The cost of the visa for the above nationalities is currently ranges between USD30 - USD35. It is important that you have an entirely empty(stamp free) page in your passport and that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your date of arrival.

PLEASE NOTE: Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after your departure date, if it is not you may be refused entry into the country. Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is solely the responsibility of the traveller and not of On The Go.

Health requirements

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications before travelling.

Water

Tap water in Laos is not considered safe to drink. It's recommended to only drink bottled mineral water, which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants.

Currency

The official Laos currency is known as the Lao Kip, although three currencies are used interchangeably for everyday transactions. These are Kip, Thai baht and US Dollars. All major currencies are exchangeable in the main towns but USD is the most useful currency (cash) to hold as it can be exchanged and used in most places. Dollar bills must be in good condition and not torn or ripped.

In smaller towns and villages, Kip is usually preferred. The rule of thumb is that for every day small purchases, prices are quoted in Kip. ATMs are only available in Vientiane, Vangvieng and Luang Prabang and dispense a maximum of approx. USD\$70 (in Kip) at any one time - it isn't advisable to rely upon them as they are commonly not working. Licensed money changers exist in Vientiane and Luang Prabang. Their rates are similar to the banks and they stay open longer. We recommend you take a mixture of cash (preferably USD) and credit/debit cards for ATMs.

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