

Laos Culture & Nature - 7 days

(Vientiane – Luang Prabang – Elephant Center)

Itinerary Overview

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	VIENTIANE ARRIVAL	--
Day 2	VIENTIANE – BUDDHA PARK – LUANG PRABANG	B
Day 3	LUANG PRABANG – ELEPHANT CONSERVATION CENTER	B/L/D
Day 4	ELEPHANT CONSERVATION CENTER – LUANG PRABANG	B/L
Day 5	LUANG PRABANG – PAK OU CAVE	B
Day 6	LUANG PRABANG – KUANG SI WATERFALL & COUNTRYSIDE	B/L
Day 7	LUANG PRABANG DEPARTURE	B

Note*: B: Breakfast / L: Lunch / D: Dinner

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1

VIENTIANE ARRIVAL

Meet upon arrival, we start our tour by heading to the religious museums of Wat Sisaket and Ho Prakeo. Wat Sisaket is the oldest temple to have survived the Siamese War of 1828 and its cloister contains more than 8000 Buddha statues. Ho Prakeo was the former home-temple of the Emerald Buddha statue, or Pra Keo, from the early Lane Xang Kingdom until the 18th century. Today it contains a collection of Buddha statues, antiques and artifacts found in Vientiane.

We then drive to That Luang Stupa, the single most important monument in Laos. This Stupa was built to cover the original, smaller stupa containing a piece of the breast bone of Buddha. That Luang is the largest stupa in Laos and serves as the main symbolic stupa for all of Laos. It's also our national symbol, a gathering place for our national Buddhism ceremony, and recognized throughout the world.

Note*: this is a copy of the itinerary on Indochina Treks Travel Official Website and not the final itinerary.

We then head to Patouxay, sometimes called the Arch de Triumph of Vientiane. This landmark is not as old as the other landmarks we visit but provides an interesting insight into Lao's more recent and turbulent history. Despite its more modern history this is still an important landmark for the people of Laos and serves an important role in many national celebrations

Meal: n/a

Accommodation: Hotel in Vientiane

Day 2

VIENTIANE – BUDDHA PARK – LUANG PRABANG

After breakfast, we drive out of town to the eccentric Buddha Park, built by a Lao man after studying in India, in order to teach following generations of Lao about religions around the world. Here we will discover many Buddhist and Hindu statues in traditional and modern styles. One of them is the largest Reclining Buddha in Laos.

Then we drive to the airport for the noon flight to Luang Prabang. Arrive Luang Prabang in early afternoon.

After taking a soft rest, you will start your first tour in Luang Prabang with a visit to Royal Palace Museum, which hosts a range of interesting artifacts. Our next stop is Wat Mai, a temple renowned for its golden bas-relief, which is one of the most beautiful temples in town.

In the late afternoon, we climb up to the top of Mount Phousi for an enjoyable exploration of the sacred, gilded stupa as well as a panoramic sunset view of the city and the Mekong River.

Meal: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Luang Prabang

Day 3

LUANG PRABANG – ELEPHANT CONSERVATION CENTER

Gather at the meeting point then we travel on the share minivan to the Sayaboury province, from there we will transfer you to the Center by boat. You will have time to settle into your private bungalow before your guide takes you to the forest. Along the way, you walk past the different enclosures where our main activities take place. After enjoying a Laotian style picnic, you can watch the resident mother and baby at the nursery. The mahout of the mother stays close by while she and her baby have a bath and play. The mother trusts the mahout around her offspring and even lets him play with her a little bit.

When the mother and baby have drunk enough and returned to the forest, you will take the boat back to the Center for the hospital visit. Our Laotian Vet Assistant or our Biologist will Introduce you to their

world and tell you more about common and uncommon injuries and their respective treatments. It is also the perfect time to ask any questions you have about the biology of the elephants.

You will then observe the elephants' daily bath and learn more about our giant guests' playful characters. Elephants are surprisingly good swimmers and love water. They also use bath time to socialize and strengthen ties in the herd.

After the elephants have washed themselves, you will have the opportunity for some soft interaction with the mahouts by your side. Get a feel for the elephant's amazing skin and prickly hair, and experience up close the dexterity of their trunk. Now it's time for them to walk back to the forest. After a short trek the mahouts will decide on a place where the elephants can graze for a while. The guide will tell you a little about the background of each elephant. They have all worked hard before they came here. See if you are already able to recognize the elephants while observing them.

Before dinner, take a moment to take in the surroundings from one of our viewpoints. You can also go for a swim in the lake, take out a canoe, or visit the museum where one of the staff will give a small presentation on our conservation efforts. During meal time, feel free to ask your unresolved questions to the staff and share one of our delicious Lao style cocktails!

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Traditional Bungalow in ECC

Day 4

ELEPHANT CONSERVATION CENTER – LUANG PRABANG

On the second day you will meet up with the elephants in the forest. After spending the night grazing in the jungle, it is time for another bath. Enjoy strolling together with these magnificent creatures in their natural environment.

When they have had their fill of water they are brought to the Socialization Area. This is an area where the elephants can freely interact during a big part of the day, recreating a semi-natural living environment. Here the elephants can enjoy being elephants. Follow the guide around the perimeter to learn more about the group and its dynamics. Take your time on the different platforms to see how a new herd is being formed. This rare opportunity will bring you closer to their natural life, something which is very special about our program and difficult to find anywhere else.

Lunch is served at the center. You have some time to relax before we bring you back to Luang Prabang by minivan. You can say your goodbyes to the staff at the restaurant or walk around the center one last time.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Luang Prabang

Day 5

LUANG PRABANG – PAK OU CAVE

We depart from Luang Prabang by boarding a boat and beginning our cruise along the amazing Mekong. We pass idyllic scenes of rural riverside life and spectacular scenery until reaching the beautiful Pak Ou Caves, sitting amongst the limestone cliffs where two rivers meet. The caves are filled with thousands of Buddha images and statues which have been placed here over many centuries.

A short distance away from Pak Ou Caves we visit a village which has been making clay jars for centuries. These jars are then used to ferment Lao rice wine wine. Nowadays the tradition continues however the village now also specialises in producing a wide range of 'Lau Lao' Lao whisky and 'Lau Hai' Lao wine. Be sure to try just a little before we head of back down river to Luang Prabang in the late afternoon.

Meal: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Luang Prabang

Day 6

LUANG PRABANG – KUANG SI WATERFALL & COUNTRYSIDE

We depart from Luang Prabang by minivan and drive to an ethnic Khmu village where we will start our adventure. We start by trekking to a nearby Hmong village. You will be able to learn about the lifestyles of Khmu and Hmong people, these two culturally very different minorities and see how, despite their differences, they work together on a daily basis and even share the same school.

As we continue onwards the trail leads through rice paddies and vegetable fields before reaching the mountainous forest. Along the way we explore a cave which was used as a bomb shelter by the local villagers during the second Indochina War.

After visiting the cave we continue trekking to one of the many springs which feeds Kuang Si waterfalls, where we can see a beautiful pool full of sacred fish. After descending from the top of the waterfall we enjoy a Lao style lunch amongst some beautiful settings!

After lunch we will relax by the waterfall with plenty of time for swimming and taking pictures of the magnificent falls and the turquoise pools.

Before leaving Kuang Si Waterfalls we will pass through a rescue and refuge centre for bears saved from the illegal wildlife trade. On our way back to Luang Prabang we will also have the opportunity to visit Lao's only buffalo dairy and try some of their buffalo cheese. We will then drive back to Luang

Prabang. Arrive the hotel in late afternoon.

Meal: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Luang Prabang

Day 7

LUANG PRAPANG DEPARTURE

Free and easy to explore Luang Prabang till airport transfer for departure flight. Trip ends.

Meal: Breakfast

Accommodation: n/a

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions

- Vientiane – Luang Prabang flight
- Overnights in selected hotels or similar
- All in-tour stationed local English speaking guide.
- Entrance fees for sightseeing mentioned in the itinerary
- Excursions as mentioned in the itinerary
- Private transfers as mentioned by private air-conditioned vehicles (including pick up & see off)
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Exclusions

- Meals and services other than those noted in the itinerary
- Visa stamping fee
- International flights pre/post tour
- Laundry, telephone calls, and personal expenditures
- Gratuities for guides, drivers, porters, boat crew, and personal, non-itinerary services

Booking Terms & Conditions

Payment

- To guarantee your land tour booking, a deposit 30% must be paid in advance. The balance must be settled **either** in USD Cash on arrival **or** 1 week before arrival date via any other methods.

- We accept payments in cash, by credit card or by bank transfer and Western Union. Any charges to settle the payment must be paid by the Clients. We will recognize the amount received only.

Cancellations

Cancellations for all or any part of the trip will not be effective until received in writing. Should you have to cancel, the following terms will apply:

- 65 days or more before departure: 20% of total tour cost
- Between 64 and 35 days before departure: 30% of total tour cost
- Between 34 and 15 days before departure: 50% of total tour cost
- Between 14 and 7 days before departure: 80% of total tour cost
- 6 days or less before departure / No Show: 100% of total tour cost

Note: We strongly recommend for your protection that you purchase a trip cancellation insurance.

Important Information

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call the travel consultant whom you deal with and then our hot line contacts. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please send us a detailed message and contact information by email to the agent and to info@indochinatreks.com, we may check and return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

Our all travel consultants use WhatsApps. Please ensure that you have the contact number. It's best to buy a local sim-card upon arrival. Most hotels offer free wifi. So it's very easy to contact in urgent case.

Emergency contact numbers

Mr. Kelvin Do: +84 986759655

Ms. Thuy Pham: +84 984654964

Combo Trip

If you book small group tour option, please note that the tour combines with our other tours. As such, some travel companions on your tour may have previously been travelling together with us. Likewise, some travel companions may be continuing together on another tour after your trip concludes.

You can start the tour on any date (please contact our consultant in advance to avoid peak dates or holidays) and customize itinerary with extra days/activities at any destination.

Internal Flights

For all internal flights, we would use Vietnamairlines, Vietjesair, Jestar, Cambodia Angkorair or Laos Airlines. Most domestic flights in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, airlines would use small 70 seat ATR72 for short distances. Most airlines in Vietnam use the Airbus A321. 20kg for checkin luggage and 7kg for hand-bag is included in the price.

International flights before/after the tour must be booked by yourself before travelling date.

Accommodation

We would use different hotel categories and you can select any basing on your budget. So your travel companions would not stay at your hotel. A Hotel Voucher will be provided once your tour is confirmed with all hotel details.

Packing List

Conservative Dress

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Note*: Please pack clothing for the season in which you will be travelling. From Dec-Feb weather can be cold, so please pack warm clothing. From May-Nov it is the wet season, so please bring waterproof clothing.

Documents

- All tickets (required)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Required visas
- Hotel & Tour Vouchers
- Meeting sign (with your names and flight details that we will use for transfers)

Airport transfers

All airport transfers are included in the tour price. You should provide us your arrival/departure flight details and we will arrange things basing on the information. A meeting sign with your name and all flight details will be sent to you. Please be ready at the lobby at pointed time for pickup.

Driver/guide should always be present at the airport before your arrival time. If you could not find the driver, please contact your travel consultant who you deal with. For any reason that airport transfer could not be arranged, please take the taxi to the hotel. We will refund the money then.

Travel insurance

Travel insurance is not included in our tour price. When travelling with us, you are suggested to buy insurance that covers all medical coverage, cancellation, personal liability, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

Trip Specific Safety

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Be aware that petty theft can be an issue in some towns and cities especially late at night. A common tactic is opportunists on motorbikes that drive by and snatch bags. Please always leave valuables and passports etc in your hotel in safety boxes if available and only carry with you enough cash to spend for the day. Bags should always be carried over the neck and not left to sit on your shoulder.

Warning

Please do not buy gems unless you know what you are doing. Even if genuine you should not expect to be able to sell them at home. If you fall victim to a gem scam, we are unable to assist you.

Visas and Entry Requirements

LAOS - Visas are issued upon arrival in Laos. You will need two passport size photographs and approx \$35. Tourists are generally admitted to Laos for 15 days with a visa on arrival or for 30 days with a visa issued at a Lao embassy. Please bring visa photos with you.

Please be aware that you will require four clean pages (minimum) in your passport and at least six months validity.

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$3-\$5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service.

Electricity

Indochina Countries use 220V, and a mixture of flat 2-pin, round 2-pin or 3 pin plugs. It is recommended to bring a universal plug adapter.