

# Authentic Laos Travel

## 14 days

(Pakse – Vientiane – Vang Vieng – Luang Prabang)

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### Itinerary Overview

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	PAKSE ARRIVAL	/
Day 2	BOLAVEN PLATEAU ESSENTIALS AND CHAMPASSAK	B/L/D
Day 3	NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CHAMPASSAK	B/L/D
Day 4	4000 ISLANDS TREASURES	B/L/D
Day 5	PAKSE – VIENTIANE	B
Day 6	VIENTIANE CITY – BUDDHA PARK	B
Day 7	VIENTIANE – VANG VIENG	B/L
Day 8	VANG VIENG – DISCOVER	B/L
Day 9	VANG VIENG – LUANG PRABANG	B
Day 10	LUANG PRABANG TO THE DENSE JUNGLE	B/L/D
Day 11	PADDLE THROUGH NAM OU’S LIFE AND CULTURE – LUANG PRABANG	B/L
Day 12	LUANG PRABANG – KUANG SI WATERFALL & COUNTRYSIDE	B/L
Day 13	LUANG PRABANG – FREE DAY	B
Day 14	LUANG PRABANG - DEPARTURE	B

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

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

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1 PAKSE - ARRIVAL

Arrive at Pakse airport. Transfer to the hotel. Free to relax after long flight.

**Meal:** n/a

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Pakse

### Day 2 BOLAVEN PLATEAU ESSENTIALS AND CHAMPASSAK

We depart from Pakse in the morning and head towards the Bolaven Plateau. Our first stop is a small village, famous for its blacksmiths, where we can see how the local people make knives and other tools by hand. We continue our journey, driving past tea and coffee plantations until reaching the heart of the Bolaven Plateau. The plateau is home to many different ethnicities including the Laven people, that gives the plateau its name.

We stop at the amazing Tad Fan Waterfall, a twin waterfall cascading over 220 meters into a valley. We then make our way to Tad Ngoung Waterfall, which has a great spot for swimming. Here we will have lunch, relaxing in the beautiful surroundings. After lunch and relaxing in the cool waters, we visit the local market in Paksong. This is a fascinating place to look around and get an insight into the lives of the local people. From the market we make our way to Tad Pasuem Waterfall where we will visit some of the different local ethnicities that live in this area. After spending some time at the waterfall and learning about the different ethnic groups, we head to the town of Champassak where we will spend the night in a local guesthouse.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Homestay in Champassak

### Day 3 NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CHAMPASSAK

We have an early start to the day with a visit to the ancient UNESCO World Heritage Site of Wat Phou. We spend some time exploring this fascinating ancient site before returning back to our guesthouse for breakfast. After breakfast we drive to a small village, where we will start our short hike through the Xe Pian National Park. After a short hike, we will have our lunch at a local restaurant, before we take a short transfer to another small village. Here we board our boat for the journey to Don Khone Island. Along the way we can see the local fishermen at work while watching the sunset, before arriving at our

hotel just in time for dinner.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Champassak

#### Day 4 4000 ISLANDS TREASURES

After breakfast we take a leisurely bicycle ride to the old bridge built by French colonists. We then cycle along the old French railway line to the stunning Lphi Waterfall. We return for lunch to a riverside restaurant where we enjoy some delicious food, watching the river float past.

In the mid afternoon we cycle to Don Det taking in the sights of island life along the way. From Don Det we take a boat to see different islands donxom don dompadee to see the people life are living in 4000 islands then take the boat back on sunset time to our hotel on Don Khone.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Don Khone

#### Day 5 PAKSE – VIENTIANE

After breakfast we take a short boat ride to a waiting minivan, We take a short drive to Khonphapheng Waterfall, the widest in South East Asia! We take in the stunning views. Then transfer to Pakse airport for afternoon flight to Vientiane.

Transfer to the hotel in Vientiane.

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Vientiane

#### Day 6 VIENTIANE CITY – BUDDHA PARK

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.

Back to the city center, we head 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. 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:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Vientiane

## Day 7 VIENTIANE – VANG VIENG

After breakfast, we drive to Vang Vieng. Upon arriving Vang Vieng, enjoy cycling tour visiting local villages.

We depart Vang Vieng and cross the bridge over the Nam Song River before starting the day by cycling past rice paddies toward the first view point, an excellent place for a few pictures. After this we head off through the karst range of the Nam Song & Vang Vieng. After a short ride we have a steep hike up to Dok Ngern, the Silver Flower Cave. Explore the hidden corridors, filled with an endless array of stalagmites and stalactites!

From here the trail gets a bit rough as we cycle along the narrow valley of the Houay San stream until Pha Deng 'red cliff' comes into view on our right. We will stop here for a short break and to take some pictures.

We continue until we arrive in the first village, on the banks of the Nam Kouang River. Here the road heads south and runs alongside the Nam Kouang; we will follow this road until we reach one of the Blue Lagoons. We will take a break here and you will have a chance to relax, swim and take some photos. We then cycle back to Vang Vieng in time for sunset.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Vang Vieng

## Day 8 VANG VIENG – DISCOVER

We depart from Vang Vieng and head north, where we visit the first cave, Tham Xang (Elephant Cave).

This cave owes its name to a remarkable limestone formation, and lies on the banks of the Nam Song River.

The nearby Tham Hoi cave (Snail Cave) winds its way deep into the mountain. We'll float through the cave on inflatable tubes, exploring its long corridors and wonderful limestone formations. A pool of cool spring water lies at the mouth of Tham Nam (Water Cave), giving us a great opportunity for a swim.

After a picnic lunch we will trek to a Hmong village, passing through rice paddies and vegetable gardens. We return to Vang Vieng by kayaking down the Nam Song, taking us through idyllic scenes of rural life, with limestone mountains in the background.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Vang Vieng

## Day 9 VANG VIENG – LUANG PRABANG

After breakfast, we drive to Luang prabang (no guide).

Arrive Luang Prabang in early afternoon. Upon arrival, 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 10 LUANG PRABANG TO THE DENSE JUNGLE

We depart Luang Prabang at 8:30AM before heading north for approximately 1.5 hours. Once we reach the village, we begin our trek through local farms before arriving at the edge of the dense jungle.

We will immerse ourselves in the beauty and diversity of the local flora and fauna. It is like venturing into another world under the canopy of huge trees where we will discover orchids, ferns, creepers and more. If we are quiet we might be able to hear the sounds of birdlife, adding to the unique atmosphere in this wonderful forest.

We will stop at a beautiful spot in the jungle for a Lao style picnic lunch. For the next one and a half hours we continue trekking through a bamboo forest before the trail starts making its way downhill to farming plots along the banks of the Nam Ou river. We cross the river on a longtail boat to reach a village on the other side where a local Tai Lue family will be our hosts for the night.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Homestay at local village

## Day 11 PADDLE THROUGH NAM OU'S LIFE & CULTURE - LUANG PRABANG

After breakfast, the guide will give you an introduction to the basics of kayaking and a safety briefing. We then head off downstream along the Nam Ou and will quickly encounter the first easy rapids! Along the way we pass majestic cliffs and villages almost untouched by modern civilization. We paddle further downstream before pausing for a delicious picnic lunch at a beautiful white sandbank amidst really amazing surroundings!

After lunch we have some time to relax and swim in the cool waters of the river. The afternoon is spent paddling on a calmer section of the Nam Ou before the river joins the Mekong. Along the way you have the opportunity to watch villagers fishing and harvesting river weed which is then dried and fried to become one of Luang Prabang's most famous, and delicious dishes. We have the option to stop at the famous Pak Ou (Buddha) Cave to see the hundreds of Buddha statues.

We continue paddling down the Mekong to visit a weaving and Lao whisky making village. After a short stop here we continue for another 30 minutes downstream to Pak Xeung where our transport is waiting to pick us up and drive us back to Luang Prabang.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Luang Prabang

## Day 12 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/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Luang Prabang

### Day 13 LUANG PRABANG – FREE DAY

Today, you are free to relax and explore Luang Prabang by yourself.

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Luang Prabang

### Day 14 LUANG PRABANG - DEPARTURE

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

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** n/a

#### Important Note\*

- PROGRAMS & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
- The itinerary can be customized basing on your interests (you can extend your stay at each location, add/remove activities)

## Inclusions & Exclusions

#### **Inclusions:**

- Pakse - Vientiane flight
- Overnights in selected hotels or similar
- Homestay at local village
- 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

## Cancellation Policy

- Cancellation received 60 days or more before arrival date: 15% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 30 days to 59 days prior arrival date: 25% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 15 days to 29 days prior arrival date: 50% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 7 days to 14 days prior arrival date: 70% of total rate
- Cancellation received less than 7 days prior arrival date or No show: 100% of total rate

## Children Policy

- For infant (<02 years old): FOC
- 02 – 10 years old without bed: 35% adult rate
- 02 – 10 years old with extra bed: 75% adult rate
- 02 – 10 years old in twin share: 90% adult rate
- from 11 years old: 100% adult rate

## 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](mailto:info@indochinatreks.com), we may check and return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

Our all travel consultants use WhatApps. 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

## 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)

## Train Travel

Train travel in Vietnam is very basic and train cleanliness is often not a priority for train staff. Sleeper trains normally have 4 seats per compartment, which convert into sleeping bunks (two upper and two lower). A sheet, pillow and blanket are provided, although many people prefer to bring their own sleeping sheet. At times, passengers of different genders may be required to share a sleeper train berth

and/or share a compartment with people not travelling in your group. For short distance - 3 hours (as Hue to Danang or vv), you will do the trip on soft/hard seat carriage.

Simple food is available on the train but many people like to stock up on freshly baked bread, cheese and fruit prior to departure. Water should also be bought before the journey.

Train journeys in Vietnam are an experience and allow you to get a real taste of Vietnam.

### **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.

### **Warming**

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**

Please note that visas for Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. For the most up to date information please check your Governments Foreign Ministry website or with you travel agent as rules do change.

CAMBODIA - Visas can be obtained at the Cambodian border or Siem Reap Airport for approx. \$35 USD very easily. Please have \*at least\* 2 passport photos with you as well.

VIETNAM - As of March 2017, a select 80 nationalities are now eligible to enter Vietnam with an E-Visa. Please contact your Foreign Ministry or Vietnamese consulate to see if your nationality is eligible. Please note that you should ONLY apply for a Vietnam E-Visa if you are entering Vietnam by international airport - either Noi Bai International Airport (Hanoi) or Tan Son Nhat International Airport (Ho Chi Minh City).

If you are entering Vietnam by land border, please apply for a regular visa for Vietnam. Many of the land borders we travel through do not accept the Vietnam E-Visa. Please view this link to apply E-Visa: <https://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn/web/quest/trang-chu-ttdt>

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.