



Centre and South (13days/12nights)

Tour Code: CAS13

Vientiane-Kong Lor-Thakek-Pakse-Tadlo-Xe Pian-4000 Islands-Don Daeng

Day1. Arrival - Vientiane (B)

Upon arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel. You have the rest of the day to relax. Overnight in Vientiane.

Day2. Vientiane – full day city tour (B)

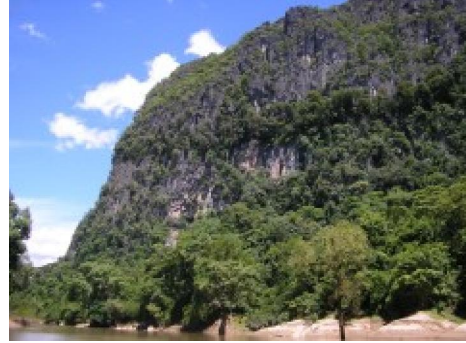
An optional early start enables you to visit the fascinating local market of **Thongkhankham** which is where the locals shop and a wide variety of weird and wonderful foods are on offer. We continue to explore Vientiane capital by visiting the major sights of the capital; including the oldest **Wat Sisaket** with thousands of miniature Buddha statues and the former royal temple of **Wat Prakeo**, which previously housed the famous Emerald Buddha Image. Enroute to Lao's national precious heritage, the famous and sacred structure of **That Luang Stupa**, you will have the opportunity to take some pictures of the imposing **Patuxay** Monument, which is well known as Vientiane's own Arc de Triumph. The final visit of the morning will be the excellent **COPE** exhibition centre, highlighting a much overlooked aspect of Laos and a major problem many of the local people face on a day to day basis in the form of unexploded ordnance as a result of heavy bombing campaigns during the Vietnam War era. An optional lunch can be taken at the excellent Mak Phet Restaurant, which helps to train disadvantaged youth for a career in the hospitality industry. This afternoon we visit the quirky yet impressive **Buddha Park**, an enchanting collection of Buddhist and Hindu sculptures on the Mekong Riverside meadow. They were created by a mysterious monk spreading his philosophy on life and revealing his ideas about the universe. Upon returning to Vientiane we have the optional of stopping at the **Lao Disabled Womens Centre**, which provides valuable training and schooling for disabled women in Laos. A spectacular view of the Mekong River at sunset is a perfect way to finish the day. Overnight in Vientiane

Day3. Vientiane – Hin Boun (B)

You will be picked up this morning from your hotel and transferred south along route 13 to the central Lao province of Khammoune. En route we stop at **Prabaht Ponsan**, a stupa dating back to the 15th Century. It is also home to the Buddha's footprint, discovered in 1933, and now an important religious site in Laos. Following lunch we continue onwards into Khammoune province and into the mountainous area, where a stop at a **view point near Khoun Kham** offers a breathtaking view over the surrounding area. We eventually reach Ban Naphouak, where we board a **local boat on the Hin Boun River**. The journey upstream takes us past some stunning limestone karst scenery, as well as a number of villages with smiling waving children. We reach your accommodation for the night, Sala Hin Boun by late afternoon. You have the rest of the day at leisure. Overnight at Sala Hin Boun.

Day4. Hin Boun – Kong Lor – Thakek (B,L)

After breakfast at Sala Hin Boun we continue by boat upriver to Kong Lor village, where you have the chance to explore, before boarding a smaller boat into the famous **Kong Lor Cave**. We navigate through the cave, which is over 7km long and includes a spectacular cavern over 100m high, following lunch in a remote village on the other side of the cave. We return through the cave and transfer by car onto the Mekong Riverside town of Thakek by early evening. Overnight in Thakek.



Kong Lor Cave and Hin Boun River scenery

Day5. Thakek – Buddha Cave and trekking (B,L)

We depart Thakek by **Tuk-tuk**, and follow the old French railway track that was destined for Vietnam but was never finished. Continuing through impressive scenery, you arrive in the village of Ban Nakhang Xang and meet the village guides who will escort you on your trek. Passing through secondary forest your guide will point out forest products that form an important part of local people's food resources. Going through a cave, you enter a striking valley with towering cliffs and forest. The trail follows the shoreline of **Nong Thao Lake** where you can see local fishermen at work. On arrival at Tham Nong Paseum cave more adventurous swimmers can explore the cave. The cave is 400 metres long and contains dramatic stalactites and stalagmites. Back in daylight, the trip continues onto Khammouane's famous Buddha cave for a traditional Lao lunch of Mekong fish, sticky rice and spicy papaya salad. After lunch we visit **Tham Pa Fa or Buddha cave**, which was rediscovered in April 2004. The cave contains 229 bronze Buddhas that are said to be over 300 years old! Time permitting you will also be able to travel by local canoe into the water cave below. Your guide will now escort you back to the village following a different route through the forest, and you will return to Thakek in the late afternoon. Overnight in Thakek.

Note: Moderate trekking, a good standard of fitness is required. During rainy season (May-September) the programme may be changed without prior warning to accommodate the local conditions.

Day6. Thakek – Pakse (B)

This morning we depart Thakek, heading south, to Pakse. En route we stop in **Savannakhet** to visit the sacred stupa of **That Inhang**, as well as the small but interesting **dinosaur museum!** We arrive in Pakse by late afternoon. Overnight in Pakse

Day7. Pakse – Tadlo (B)

This morning you will be met and taken by road east into the **Bolaven Plateau**. The Bolaven Plateau is known for its cooler temperature being located high above the Mekong Valley. The area is famous for its many waterfalls, and the most beautiful of these falls, **Tad Fan**, we visit. Tad Fan waterfall is spectacular with twin waterfalls plummeting into a deep gorge surrounded by flourishing vegetation. A trip to the plateau provides a refreshing break from the heat and allows you to observe the cultivation of rich coffee, tea, cardamom, bananas, and other crops that can be seen en route. This trip gives visitors the chance to venture off the beaten track and to discover some of the lesser-known areas of Laos, exploring the wild beauty of this southern

region. In the afternoon we arrive at **Tad Lo**, home to another scenic waterfall and numerous ethnic minority groups including the Alak, Nge, and Katu. We overnight at Tad Lo Lodge, located uniquely right next to the beautiful waterfall itself. Overnight in Tadlo.

Day8. Tadlo –Kingfisher (B)

After an early breakfast, we continue our tour of the Bolevan Plateau and visit head **Pha Suam** waterfall and to explore the ethnic minority **villages of Lao Teung**. We continue to travel by road to Xe Pian National Park or Kingfisher Ecolodge where you have the rest of the afternoon at leisure. Overnight at Kingfisher

Day9. Kingfisher – Elephant Safari (B,L)

Today you experience a full day **Adventure Safari** in the jungle by elephant, like the first foreign explorers of this country often did during their voyages.

You will start in the morning from the village of Khat Ngong and, through paddy fields and wetlands, you will be led inside the jungle that surrounds the area.

From the top of your elephant you will have a particular point of view of the dry dipterocarp forest that characterize Xe Pian protected area, you will experience the jungle environment while cicadas and birds sounds will accompany you along the way. After two to three hours of ride (depending on trail and weather conditions you will step down from your elephant and, after let them be free to feed in the forest, our guide and mahouts will serve you a delicious picnic lunch. After resting and watching the elephants roaming around in search for food, you will continue your jungle safari on the way back to the village; arrival is expected at around 16:00. Overnight at Kingfisher.

Day10. Kingfisher – Khone Island - Khong Island (B)

Following breakfast, we leave Kingfisher and Xe Pian and transfer by road to the 4000 Islands area boarding a boat to **Khone Island** to re-trace the French colonial-past, where some old colonial houses still stand and Lao's first railway with its own locomotive. We continue our exploration of Khone Island on foot and visit the most beautiful waterfall **Liphi**, also known as the Samphamith, which forms a natural border between Laos and Cambodia. If we have luck, we may catch a glimpse of the rare freshwater **Irrawaddy Mekong Dolphin** at Ban Hang Khone. We then continue by boat to Khong Island where we overnight. Overnight on Khong Island



Khong Island and Wat Phou

Day11. Khong Island – Khone Phapeng –Wat Phou- Don Daeng (B)

This morning we drive to the famous waterfall of **Khone Phapeng** - the largest waterfall in South East Asia, also known as the 'Niagara of the east'. We then head north by road and across the Mekong by ferry to visit the fascinating pre-Angkorian ruins of **Wat Phu**, one of Southeast Asia's most dramatically situated temples. To end the day, we travel by boat to the island of Don Daeng where you will overnight.

Day12. Don Daeng – free day (B)

You have a free day at leisure today, to relax by the pool or hire bicycles to explore the island and its enchanting little villages.

Day13. Don Daeng - Pakse – Departure (B)

After breakfast, you will be transferred back to Pakse and onto the airport for your departing flight.

END OF SERVICES

Tour price per person in US\$:

Price valid from 01-Oct-09 to 30-Sep-2010

Hotel	1	2	3-4	5-9	Single Supplement
Boutique	2,762	1,495	1,198	1,038	414

Inclusive of above prices:	Exclusive of above prices:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation in private vehicle • Accommodation in twin shared room • Domestic air ticket as stated only • Private Boat trip as stated in above sights • English speaking guide • Admission fee to indicated sights • Meals: daily breakfast at hotel, lunch/dinner where stated only • Gov't tax and service charge • Luggage handling and drinking water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visa stamping fee on arrival • Int'l air tickets to/from Laos • Travel Insurance in all kinds • Single room (quoted separately) • Other foreign language guide • Peak tourist season or special event rates • Child or adult in triple sharing room • Tip, drinks and other personal expenses

Hotels quoted in above package

Location	Boutique
Vientiane	Green Park (Deluxe)
Hin Boun	Sala Hin Boun (Riverfront Room)
Thakek	Inthila Hotel (Deluxe)
Pakse	Pakse Hotel (Panorama)
Tadlo	Tadlo Lodge (Standard)
Xe Pian	Kingfisher (Comfort Bungalow)
Khong Island	Senesothxeuen (Superior)
Don Daeng	La Folie Lodge (Superior)