



Down the Mekong in depth (10days/9nights) Chiang Rai-Pakbeng-Luang Prabang- Vientiane-Pakse-4000 Islands

Explore the mighty Mekong River in depth tracing its route from northern Laos all the way down to the 4000 Islands in the south, including two luxurious cruises.

Day1. Arrival – Chiang Rai

Upon arrival you will be transferred to your hotel where you have the rest of the day at leisure. Overnight in Chiang Rai

Day2. Huay Xai – Pakbeng (B,L,D)

We transfer early this morning to the border town of Huay Xay. **The Luang Say Cruise** boat leaves Huay Xay pier at 09:00 hrs for a cruise down the Mekong to Pakbeng. En route one stop is made to observe rural life along the Mekong and visit minority ethnic groups; then, a buffet lunch on board. Arrive Pakbeng before sunset and check-in at LuangSay Lodge. You can then enjoy dinner on the terrace overlooking the Mekong River.

Overnight in Pakbeng

Day3. Pakbeng – Pak Ou Caves – Luang Prabang (B,L)

Full breakfast at lodge, (Optional: walk to Pakbeng market, where people from the surrounding minority villages exchange their goods). At 08:30 board the boat for the second leg of the cruise. A short stop to discover a Hmong village before having a buffet lunch on board. Continue to Pak-Ou village at the mouth of the Nam Ou River, and then visit **Pak Ou Caves** "Cave of a thousand Buddha's". On the way to Luang Prabang a brief stop is made to observe the traditional process of manufacturing local rice alcohol. Arrive at Luang Prabang before sunset.

Overnight in Luang Prabang.

Day4. Luang Prabang – half day city walking tour (B)

After breakfast we visit the **Royal Palace Museum** which hosts a range of interesting artefacts. We begin our walking tour, taking in some of Luang Prabangs hidden secrets, walking down the quiet back lanes leading to Wat Xiengthong. Along the way we stop at **Wat Chomkhong**, which is known for its decorative carvings. This area contains a mix of beautiful old French Colonial buildings, and traditional old Lao houses, which you will have time to admire, along with a stop at the small but charming **Wat Phapai**. We also pass by the **Fine Arts School**, where we can see some of the quality artwork on display. Our final visit of the day is the magnificent **Wat Xiengthong**, with its roofs sweeping low to the ground, representing the classical Luang Prabang style. Overnight in Luang Prabang.

Day5. Luang Prabang – Hmong Experience and Kuang Si Waterfall (B,L)

After breakfast, we visit the local **Phosi Market**, this is the place where all the locals shop and your guide will show you the diverse offerings on display. We also stop at **Ock Pop Tock**, a silk weaving centre. Here you will be given a guided tour and the silk weaving process will be explained. Next we drive to **Ban Thinkeo**, a Hmong village and start trekking with the villagers. Your guide will explain to you the common use of the plants for the Hmong people. You will go to the garden and cut some vegetables and herbs with the local people. We then continue to **Kuang Si Waterfall**, where you will enjoy a picnic lunch overlooking the beautiful multi tiered falls. You also have the opportunity to cool off in the turquoise blue pools. Afterwards you return to Luang Prabang in time to catch the sun setting over the Mekong.

Note: during rainy season the itinerary is subject to change due to the weather conditions, an alternative programme is available.

Day6. Luang Prabang – Vientiane - half day city tour (Flight) (B)

You will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Vientiane. Upon arrival you will be checked into your hotel and following lunch we 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 day 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. Overnight in Vientiane.

Day7. Vientiane – Pakse – Vat Phou Cruise (Flight) (B,L,D)

You will depart Vientiane early for your 6.30am flight to Pakse. On arrival you will be met and transferred to the **Vat Phou Cruise** leaving Pakse for Champassak at 10:00am. Once on board, we head south, arriving at Champassak in time for a riverside lunch, followed by a guided tour of the mysterious pre-Angkorian 10th century temple of Wat Phou, the boat's namesake. As dusk falls, we board the Vat Phou for a relaxing cruise down-river, enjoying the tropical sunset on the deck. Dinner is served on board, while the boat docks for the night alongside a remote Laotian village. Overnight on board Vat Phou Cruise.

Day 8: Vat Phou Cruise (Huei Thamo - Oum Moug Temple - Khong Island) (B,L,D)

After a leisurely breakfast on board, we set sail for the village of Huei Thamo, only a few minutes walk away from the spectacular hidden ancient forest temple of **Oum Moug**. We rejoin the boat for a leisurely cruise southbound and enjoy lunch on the deck, continuing south to the wild paradise of the "4,000 islands" region. In the afternoon we will arrive at Ban Dua Tae, a traditional Laotian Village where the traditional way of life has not changed in centuries. We observe traditional village life and learn about the daily activities within the village. This evening we enjoy a quiet dinner on board, under the stars, serenaded by the songs of the buffalo toads. Overnight on board Wat Phou Cruise.

Day 9: Vat Phou Cruise (Veuthong - the "Niagara of the East - Xieng Di) – Pakse (B,L)

Today we will enjoy breakfast on the upper deck, while cruising to the small village of Ban Veuthong, where we will board a small longtail boat to **Khong**

Island, the largest island in the 4,000 islands region. After visiting the island, we take a long tail boat back to the mainland for lunch amid the bygone splendid of another age; colourful French colonial houses and an old customs post, alongside a stone quay. We will transfer by minivan to the encaptivating, scenic splendor of the **Khone Phapeng** waterfall, "the Niagara of the East", close to the Cambodian border. We return to Pakse for "civilization", which is a two-hour journey by road, arriving in the late afternoon. Overnight in Pakse.

Day 10 : Pakse – Departure (B)

After breakfast; you will be transferred to the airport for your departure.

END OF SERVICES

Hotels quoted in above package

Location	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star
ChiangRai	Wiang Inn (Superior)	The Legend (Superior)	The Legend (Superior)
Pakbeng	Luang Say Lodge	Luang Say Lodge	Luang Say Lodge
Luang Prabang	Mekong River Side(Superior)	Villa Santi Hotel (Deluxe)	Villa Maly (Superior)
Vientiane	City Inn (Deluxe)	Green Park Boutique (Deluxe)	Settha Palace (Deluxe)
4000 Islands	Vat Phou Cruise	Vat Phou Cruise	Vat Phou Cruise
Pakse	Pakse Hotel (Panorama)	Pakse Hotel (Panorama)	Pakse Hotel (Panorama)

****Prices from just 1,559 USD per person based on a 2 person private tour****