



Grand Tour of Laos (15days/14nights) Chaing Rai- Pakbeng-Luang Prabang-Xiengkhuang-Vang Vieng- Vientiane-Pakse-Tadlo-Khong Island-Done Daeng

This is the big tour of Laos, demonstrating the huge variety of sights and activities the country has to offer, and showing you just how to spend two unforgettable weeks in this enchanting country. From a luxury Mekong Cruise, to Hmong villages, mysterious archaeological sites, ornate temples and stunning waterfalls this tour has it all!

Day1. Arrival – Chaing Rai

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

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. Overnight in Xiengkhuang

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

Day6. Luang Prabang – Xiengkhuang (B)

We start early this morning, around 8am for the drive to Xiengkhuang, famous for the 'Plain of Jars'. The road follows a twisty mountain route, and we make our first stop at **Houi Hei**, which offers great views of the surrounding mountains. We then continue **Ban Kiu Kam Pone, a Khmu village** to explore, before arriving in **Phou Khoun for lunch**. We continue on the road into Xiengkhuang province, reaching our highest altitude of the day 1500m above sea level, just after Phou Khoun. We have time to make a stop at **Ban Son Boom, a Hmong village**. Our final stops of the day are a reminder that this region played a major part during the Vietnam War – as we visit a **hidden Buddha Cave**, that served as an army hospital during the war and our final stop of the day, is an optional stop to visit **an old Russian tank**. We arrive at your hotel by early evening. Overnight in Xiengkhuang.

Day7 Xieng Khuang - Plain of Jars (B)

This morning we visit the **Mines Action Group** or MAG office to learn about the work they do in clearing land mines and unexploded ordnance in the area. We then transfer out to the picturesque **Jar Site 2**, and begin our 1 hour trek along the ridge to the impressive **Jar Site 3**, consisting over around 150 jars located on top of a hill, offering great views over the surrounding countryside. In the afternoon we visit **Jar Site 1**, the largest site, containing over 300 jars, before returning to your hotel by late afternoon. Overnight in Xiengkhuang.

Day8. Xiengkhuang –Muang Khoun - Vang Vieng (B)

We start early this morning, visiting the interesting **Central Market**, then (*time permitting*) driving out to the ancient town of **Muang Khoun**, the former provincial capital, where you can explore the ruins of a number of ancient pagodas in the Lanna style and **Wat Phiawat**, a ruined temple containing a huge sitting Buddha. We then travel by road to Vang Vieng, stopping for a late lunch in Phou Khoun. Following lunch we stop at **Ban Hin Ngon**, a picturesque Hmong village. We also have an optional stop at **Koe Kuang**, which boasts a local forest market, offering edible snakes, rats and assorted reptiles! Our final stop of the day is a short photo stop of the stunning limestone karst scenery at **Phatang Mountain** view point. We then arrive in Vang Vieng by early evening where you have the rest of the day at leisure. O

Day9. Vang Vieng –Vientiane (B)

This morning we visit the picturesque **Tham Jang** cave, that offers stunning views of over the Nam Song River and surrounding karst scenery. We then set out on the road towards Vientiane. En route we stop at **Tha Heua**, a small village that specializes in dried fish, which you will see hanging in front of the houses. We then continue to **Nam Ngum**, a picturesque lake created by damming the Nam Ngum River. Following lunch overlooking the lake, we stop over at **Ban Keun**, which is famous for its salt mine. Here you can learn about the daily working life of the local people. Just outside of Vientiane we make a final stop at the interesting **Don Makai Market**, an insect market, where, the adventurous can try some of the tasty snacks on offer! Return to Vientiane by early evening. Overnight in Vientiane.

Day10. Vientiane - half day city tour (B)

Your half day city tour, begin with 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

Day11. Vientiane – Pakse – Tadlo (B)

You will be transferred to the airport early this morning for the flight to Pakse. Upon arrival you will be met and transferred by road east into the **Bolaven Plateau**. The Bolaven Plateau is known for its cooler temperature being located high above the Mekong Valley. Our first stop is to visit **Houey Ten**, a Katu village specializing in knifemaking. We then stop tea plantation, followed by a stop at **Tad Fan Waterfall**, a picturesque twin chute waterfall. We then make a stop at a coffee plantation, en route to **Tha Teng Market**, a colourful ethnic minority food market. Next we explore another interesting minority village, **Ban Bong Neua**, an Alak village, that boasts a sacrificial alter. We arrive at the beautiful **Tadlo Waterfall** in the afternoon, where you have the rest of the day at leisure. You also have the option of a short elephant ride to take in the beautiful scenery. Overnight at Tadlo.

Day12. Tadlo – Pakse – Wat Phou –Khong Island (B)

After breakfast, we head out of the plateau, stopping first at the attractive **Paxuam Waterfall**. We then transfer to Champassak and onto **Wat Phou**, another World Heritage Site in Laos, which became recognized by UNESCO in 2002. Wat Phou is the site of ruins which were once part of a temple built some time before Angkor Wat in Siem Reap. It contains some of the most Ancient Khmer architectures which date back to between the 7-11th centuries. In the late afternoon you will drive to **Don Khong**, an area of the 4000 islands which is the widest point of the Mekong River during the rainy season, although during the dry months the river recedes, leaving behind thousands of islands and islets. Arrive at Khong Island via ferry early evening.

Day13. Khong Island – Khone Island – Don Daeng (B)

Following breakfast, we enjoy a visit to the surrounding countryside, and embark on a long tail boat tour to Don Khone, where we disembark and have the option of

exploring the island by bicycle, which takes you to visit the remains of the French period and **Liphi Waterfall** or "the Corridor of the Devil". We return to the mainland at the fishing village of Ban Nakasang and drive further south to visit **Khone Phapheng**. Khone Phapheng is considered the largest waterfall by volume in South East Asia; this is a really impressive site near the Lao-Cambodian border, set within an area which is teeming with wildlife, making this area one of the most breathtaking destinations in Laos. Then we drive back North and you will take the boat across the Mekong to the island of Don Daeng, where you have the rest of the day at leisure to relax, or explore this peaceful island.

Day14. Don Daeng – free day (B)

A free day at leisure today, to relax by the pool or hire bicycles to explore the island and its enchanting little villages. Overnight on Don Daeng.

Day15. 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
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)
Xiengkhuang	Auberge Plain des Jarres (DLX)	Auberge Plain des Jarres (DLX)	Auberge Plain des Jarres (DLX)
Vang Vieng	Thavonesouk (Riverfront Suite)	Villa Namsong (SUP)	Villa Namsong (SUP)
Vientiane	City Inn (Deluxe)	Green Park Boutique (Deluxe)	Settha Palace (Deluxe)
Tadlo	Tad Lo Lodge	Tad Lo Lodge	Tad Lo Lodge
Khong Island	Senesothxuene (Superior Mekong View)	Senesothxuene (Superior Mekong View)	Senesothxuene (Superior Mekong View)
Don Daeng	La Folie Lodge (SUP)	La Folie Lodge (SUP)	La Folie Lodge (SUP)

****Prices from just 2060 USD per person based on a 2 person private tour****