

Laos & Cambodia – ‘Mekong Adventure’

All year round 18D/17N ex London or 17D/16N Luang Prabang to Phnom Penh

Follow one of the world’s greatest rivers - the Mekong: from historic, World Heritage, Luang Prabang in the far north of Laos, through the heart of Indochina to Cambodia’s bustling and fascinating capital Phnom Penh.

An unforgettable voyage by road and by river across Laos and Cambodia; Luang Prabang, the Plain of Jars, Vientiane, Hin Boun, Boloven Plateau, UNESCO Wat Phu and the 4,000 Islands - some of the region’s most remote and unspoilt areas and amongst some of Asia’s most sublime scenery and spectacular sights.



Day 1 Depart London Heathrow Airport.

Day 2 Nestled in the mountains, long isolated from the outside world, we’ll discover World Heritage Site, Luang Prabang’s fabulous temples, French colonial architecture and taste Lao delicacies (and the famous Lao beer!) in riverside cafes. Morning is at leisure to allow you to wander the quiet, picturesque lanes or check out the hill-tribe handicraft market and an afternoon walking tour of the town including the National Museum & former king’s palace, Wat Xiengthong and the Fine Arts School to see how traditional Lao arts and handicrafts are being preserved with perhaps a sunset visit to Phu Si Hill Temple.

Day 3 Day trip through the surrounding hills to visit the spectacular Kuang Si Waterfalls and to discover the fascinating, traditional village life of some of the local peoples.

Day 4 Early departure for a drive along scenic mountain roads to Phonsavan Town in Xieng Khouang province – location of the famous and mysterious ‘Plain of Jars’. Stops on the way include Khmu and Hmong villages as well as a reminder that this region played a major part during the Vietnam War as we visit a hidden cave temple that served as an army hospital during the combat. Late afternoon arrival in Phonsavan and atmospheric dusk visit to one of the famous jar sites.



Day 5 Morning visit to 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. Lunch in Phonsavan before a flight to the Lao capital of Vientiane and time perhaps to stretch our legs with a stroll along the Mekong waterfront for sundowners in a riverbank cafe?

Day 6 Day tour of some of the city's fascinating sites; Si Saket Temple with its thousand Buddha images, the bustling morning market and Vientiane's most famous monument – the That Luang Stupa as well as the unusual 'Buddha Park'. Less cheerful, but we feel important and highly informative stops, will also be made at the excellent [COPE](#) exhibition centre, highlighting a major problem many of the local people face daily in the form of unexploded ordnance as a result of the heavy bombing campaigns during the Vietnam War era.

Day 7 Leave Vientiane for a leisurely drive south east to Khammoune, one of Laos's most picturesque, yet least visited Provinces. Visits along the way will include a 15th century stupa, a hill-tribe market and plenty of photo opportunities! Afternoon arrival at our night's accommodation in Hin Boun, a remote and charming riverside lodge set amongst dramatic limestone scenery. Time to relax or explore the area.



Day 8 Departure by boat for an exploration of the incredible Konglor Cave – a 7 km long cavern, up to 100 m high, with spectacular stalactite formations and an underground river running from end to end. On traversing the cave we'll have an opportunity for a hike through the hidden valley on the far side before completing our day with a transfer to the nearby town of Thakaek – an old Mekong river port from the French era – in time for sundowners on the waterfront.

Day 9 A fascinating day trip through the area's awesome limestone landscapes including a forest hike where local guides will show you traditional forest food and medicines collected by the local inhabitants; a walk around the serene Nong Thao Lake to discover local fishing techniques, stop-offs in rarely visited villages and a visit to a secret 300 year old cave temple, only discovered in 2004. Late afternoon drive to Savannakhet - another important colonial period town – for our night's accommodation.

Day 10 Continue south along the Mekong to another old river port, Pakse. Lunchtime arrival and the afternoon at leisure to explore the local markets, try out a Lao style spa, or just relax in the hotel's roof garden and take in the sunset?

Day 11 Day tour of some of the sites of the Boloven Plateau, home to numerous ethnic minorities and the centre of Lao's coffee growing industry including visits to one of the area's coffee plantations and a chance to bathe in the Tad Yeuang Falls.

Day 12 Boat trip down the Mekong River south to the small town of Champassak. Afternoon trip to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Wat Phu – a pre-Angkor, Khmer temple dramatically situated on a mountain side overlooking the valley of the Mekong.



Day 13 Morning transfer to Kietngong village for an elephant trek to some hilltop ruins and on to the delightful Kingfisher Eco Lodge on the edge of the Sepian national Biodiversity Area for our night's accommodation. Afternoon hike to discover the area, bird watching in the nearby wetlands or simply resting up on the balcony admiring the superb view.

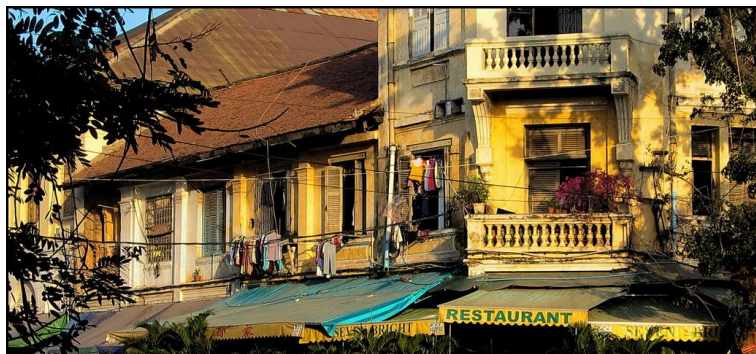
Day 14 Continuing south to the Four Thousand Islands - a stretch of the Mekong River of truly outstanding natural beauty straddling the Lao/Cambodian border.

Day 15 Explore some of the islands by boat, kayak and on foot. Visit SE Asia's largest waterfalls – the stunning Khon Phapaeng Falls – and with luck catch a glimpse of some of the rare freshwater dolphins which still inhabit this stretch of the river.



Day 16 Continuing down the Mekong we'll follow the picturesque jungle-lined river into Cambodia and the remote town of Stung Treng. From here we'll continue overland, south to the old French port of Kratie for our night's accommodation. Afternoon to wander the bustling river front area.

Day 17 The final leg of our journey will take us overland via Kompong Cham and a visit to the Angkor era temple of Wat Nokor to Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh.



Day 18 Departure for London, via Bangkok and evening arrival.

Fitness: easy to moderate – maximum walking approx. 3 hrs on day 9, kayaking approx. 2 hrs on day 15.

Transport: Minibus, boat, flight

Accommodation: hotel, guesthouse, eco lodge

Meals: full board except for lunch on days 2 & 14, and dinner on days 3, 6, 13, 15 & 17

Highlights: World Heritage Luang Prabang, Vientiane, Hin Boun, Wat Phu, Konglor cave, Four Thousand Islands, elephant riding, Phapaeng Falls, kayaking on the Mekong, Mekong River trip, Phnom Penh, local food.

Notes: this tour is offered inclusive of return flights from London. Those persons not wishing to take up the flight option would join the tour in Luang Prabang on day 2 and finish in Phnom Penh on day 18



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