



2012 Laos & Cambodia Experience

14 days / 13 nights

Highlights

Mekong River Journey, Pak Ou Caves, Luang Prabang, Kuang Si Falls, Lao Cooking Class, Vientiane, Phnom Penh, Killing Fields, Kampong Thom, Angkor Wat, Boeng Mealea, Ta Prohm, Tonle Sap Lake

Laos and Cambodia Experience

Laos is a magical nation where you will meet devout monks and hilltribe farmers, enjoy lush tropical backgrounds and thundering waterfalls, and a night market full of fabrics, handicrafts and delicious local snacks. Travelling down the mighty Mekong on a private boat is a truly unique experience.

In Cambodia, travel on an ancient Angkorian highway once used by Khmer royalty. Visit the splendid Angkor Wat and marvel at the architectural and artistic glory of this great temple. Temples such as Banteay Srei and Boeng Mealea lie just far enough off the beaten path that you can have a more intimate experience with the ruins, and a trip out to Tonle Sap Lake will afford insight into this ecological marvel.

All road travel is in comfortable minibuses or mid-sized coaches. Your journey is escorted by both a Western tour leader, based on a minimum of seven travellers, and a local English-speaking guide in each location. Groups are never more than 16 travellers in size.

Tour grading - Moderate

This journey is suitable for travellers with average levels of fitness and independent mobility. The tour involves lots of walking, sometimes over uneven surfaces or climbing stairs, in the heat. There are also rides on tuk-tuks, a tethered balloon and boat trips. You will need to be able to board and disembark boats independently, sometimes between muddy or slippery banks. There are some long boat journeys and road journeys on occasionally rough roads. While accommodation is three-star, this is not 'sanitised' travel; by day you will walk through markets and villages, meet local people, and sample local food.

What's included

- 13 nights accommodation (1 night basic)
- Breakfast daily, four lunches, one dinner (cooking class)
- All road transport in modern, air-conditioned vehicles (Angkor temple touring and Luang Prabang town touring by tuk-tuk)
- Boat trips on the Mekong River
- 1 domestic flight; 1 international flight between Vientiane and Phnom Penh
- All sightseeing as specified, including entrance fees
- Expert Western tour leader (group size seven minimum) and local guides throughout
- Tour arrival and departure airport transfer 0073

Climate

There are two main seasons in both Laos and Cambodia. From November to March temperatures are slightly cooler with little rain. Bring a layer of warm clothing when travelling to the north of Laos between November and February. From May to October, the rainy season, average temperatures in the day range from 24 to 35 degrees Celsius (75 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit). During this period it rains for a short time in the afternoon, Angkor temple moats are full, the scenery is greener, and there tend to be fewer tourists. Many people prefer to travel at this time of the year.

Itinerary

DAY 1 - ARRIVE CHIANG RAI

Arrive in Chiang Rai in the Golden Triangle, where Thailand, Laos and Myanmar (Burma) meet, and prepare for your Mekong boat journey.

LALUNA RESORT - 1 night

DAY 2 - CHIANG RAI TO PAKBENG

Transfer to the Lao/Thai border to board a private slow boat and glide down the majestic Mekong River to the small town of Pakbeng. Witness the amazing scenery of this region along the way.

PHETSOKXAI - 1 night

DAY 3 - PAKBENG TO LUANG PRABANG

Continue your journey down the Mekong to the famous UNESCO-heritage listed city of Luang Prabang. On the way stop at Pak Ou (thousand Buddha) caves.

SALA PRABANG - 3 nights

DAY 4 - LUANG PRABANG

Take a trip to the spectacular National Museum, formally the royal residence, then visit the most beautiful of the town's wats to gain an appreciation for Buddhist culture. In the afternoon, finish off the day with a game of petanque and sunset drinks on the famous Mekong River.

DAY 5 - LUANG PRABANG

Rise early this morning to witness hundreds of monks perform the morning alms tradition. Visit a local market, the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, then drive to the beautiful Kuang Si falls for swimming and a stop at a bear rescue centre. In the evening, participate in a fun and interactive Lao cooking class where you have the chance to taste your own creations!

DAY 6 - LUANG PRABANG TO VIENTIANE

Fly to the sleepy Laotian capital, Vientiane. Visit the National Museum and the golden That Luang.

MERCURE VIENTIANE - 2 nights

DAY 7 - VIENTIANE

Continue exploring the capital's most famous landmarks with visits to Wat Si Saket, Haw Phra Kaew and the Patuxai Independence Monument. Also get the chance to visit the educational and interactive COPE visitors centre. COPE is an organisation dedicated to assisting Lao people in need of prosthetic limbs, often as a result of exploded ordinance.

DAY 8 - VIENTIANE TO PHNOM PENH

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Phnom Penh. Upon arrival in Phnom Penh you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Tonight, meet your tour leader for a tour briefing and enjoy a welcome drink.

SUNWAY HOTEL - 2 nights

DAY 9 - PHNOM PENH

Discover the Royal Palace, National Museum and Childsafe Centre, before learning about Cambodia's sombre recent history at Tuol Sleng and the Killing Fields.

DAY 10 - KAMPONG THOM

Witness traditional rural scenes, visit a local silk farm, Explore the pre-Angkorian ruins of Sambor Pre Kuk.

SAMBOR VILLAGE HOTEL - 1 night

DAY 11 - TONLE SAP SIEM REAP

En-route to Siem Reap stop to take a boat ride on Tonle Sap lake.

ROYAL BAY INN ANGKOR RESORT - 3 nights

DAY 12 - SIEM REAP

Explore Angkor Wat & the Bayon by tuk-tuk, see the atmospheric ruins of Ta Prohm and Preah Khan.

DAY 13 - SIEM REAP

Visit a local market at Dom Deak and the outer-lying temples of Boeng Mealea, Banteay Srei and Banteay Samre.

DAY 14 - DEPART SIEM REAP

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your onward journey.

Hotel brief

Chiang Rai - LALUNA RESORT

This collection of bungalow rooms with a large, palm-fringed swimming pool makes for a charming tropical retreat.

Pakbeng - PHETSOKXAI

The Phetsokxai Lodge in Pakbeng is basic but contains all the necessary facilities for a night's stay. Due to the geographical isolation of Pakbeng, quality accommodation big enough to take groups is limited. We have chosen the Phetsokxai Lodge because - although simple in style - it is clean and comfortable, has private bathrooms, and is able to take our small groups. We do ask you to understand in advance that your stay in this accommodation will be noticeably 'simpler' than at other properties used on this journey.

Luang Prabang - SALA PRABANG

Not a hotel per se, but a converted series of historic houses with rustic charm, clustered together in the heart of Luang Prabang. Rooms do not have extra amenities such as television, phone, or mini-bar, but with its restored original buildings, this accommodation has great character and is unbeatable in terms of location and atmosphere.

Vientiane - MERCURE VIENTIANE

Comfortable, well-maintained 3.5-star hotel with excellent facilities and 24 hour service. Nice pool, gym and bar area.

Phnom Penh - SUNWAY HOTEL

Located near Wat Phnom, a good four-star hotel that is central and close to riverfront cafes and restaurants.

Kampong Thom - SAMBOR VILLAGE HOTEL

Located on the bank of Steung Sen Stream this tranquil hideaway is the perfect hotel to relax. Bungalow style rooms in gardens that boast all the fruits and vegetable grown in the region. Resort has large swimming pool and great restaurant.

Siem Reap - ROYAL BAY INN ANGKOR INN

Three-star, set in beautiful gardens, comfortable and well located hotel in Siem Reap, close to the heart of town and bustling central market. Featuring a nice pool and tastefully finished rooms.

Visa requirements

Of all the countries in which we operate tours, Thailand is perhaps the most visitor-friendly in terms of arrival. Holders of passports from Australia, New Zealand, the USA, UK and Canada do not need visas for stays of up to 30 days in Thailand.

All foreign tourists to Laos must possess a valid visa. Visas for most nationalities can be issued on arrival at the border crossing from Thailand to Laos in Huay Xai, where the process is straightforward. Visas are valid for 30 days and cost between 30 USD and 42 USD depending on nationality. More detailed visa information is available in our pre-departure information.

All persons entering Cambodia require a visa. Tourist visas for Cambodia can be obtained on arrival at air and land borders for a cost of 20 USD. More detailed visa information is available in

our pre-departure information. It is your responsibility to make sure requirements are filled.

Health issues

Good medical advice usually recommends vaccinations/prophylactics in advance of travel to Cambodia. We suggest that you consult with your doctor to discuss health care needs specific to your holiday.

Travel insurance

You must be comprehensively insured as a condition of travelling with Travel Indochina. Insurance should include cover for personal accident and medical expenses, evacuation and repatriation, baggage loss, and cancellation or curtailment of your holiday. Your booking will not be confirmed if you cannot confirm possession of appropriate insurance, and our ground operations have the right to prevent you from travelling in the event that you cannot present your insurance details at the start of the tour. Your travel agent can organise travel insurance for you.

Recommended reading

- Gecko Tales - Carol Livingston
- River of Time - Jon Swain
- A Brief History of Cambodia - David Chandler
- Travels in Siam, Cambodia, Laos & Annam - Henri Mouhot
- Cambodia, Report from a Stricken Land - Henry Kamm
- The Gate - Francoise Bizot
- Bamboo Palace - Chris Kremmer
- Ant Egg Soup - Natacha du Pont de Bie
- The Ravens: Pilots of the Secret War - Christopher Robbins
- Shooting at the Moon - Robert Wagner
- A Brief History of Laos - Grant Evans

A responsible Travel Indochina

Travel Indochina practices a thorough, realistic responsible travel policy, full details of which can be found on our website. Our policy includes our downloadable 'Tread Lightly' booklet, full of useful pointers which will make you a more 'responsible' traveller in Asia.

Pre and post tour arrangements

If you would like to book pre or post tour hotel arrangements or are interested in doing additional quality touring before or after your Small Group Journey, either contact Travel Indochina or your local travel agent.

What next

Once your booking has been confirmed and you have paid in full you will receive a detailed itinerary for this tour, detailing day by day arrangements, as well as a pre-departure guide containing valuable information designed to help you get the most out of your holiday.

About Travel Indochina

Travel Indochina has been operating Small Group Journeys to Asia since 1993. Based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, our idea is simple - escape the tourist traps to explore the essence of Asia's history, culture, natural beauty and most importantly, Asia's people. Another feature is the quality, character and location of our accommodation. Our travellers enjoy the combination of well thought out itineraries, tasteful accommodation, insightful Western and local leaders, value for money, and our experience and base in the region.

Disclaimer

Information in this document was correct at the time of its preparation. Travel Indochina reserves the right to make itinerary changes as operational or other circumstances require.