



LAOS | TO STEP BACK IN TIME

Luang Prabang, a remote and peaceful city set along confluence of the Mekong and Nam Kam Rivers, is home to 32 temples and 100+ monks. The surrounding mountains act as a barrier, shielding the untouched town from the outside world & preserving the best of its heritage. Faith remains the city’s heart and soul.

DAY 1

IN TRANSIT

11:30

Arrive Luang Prabang
Hop in a tuk tuk & head to
La Residence Phou Vao



SUGGESTED ROUTE

Los Angeles [LAX]—Bangkok [BKK]
Bangkok [BKK]—Luang Prabang [LPQ]

18:00

Dinner @ The Apsara
Overlooking the Nam Khan, Apsara offers some of the city’s best food. We recommend the fish stuffed with lemongrass and drizzled with a tamarind-lime sauce.

Stay

LA RÉSIDENCE PHOU VAO
Positioned atop Phou Vao Hill, La Residence Phou Vao offers breathtaking views of the city and the Mekong Valley. It offers an air of old luxury and is an ideal place to lay your head after a long journey.

DAY 2

LUANG PRABANG

06:00

Early morning alms ceremony @ Wat Mai
The early morning finds the town flooded with saffron-robed monks, collecting food offerings in their small bowls. Wat Mai Suwannapumaram [Wat Mai] is located in the city center, next to the Royal Palace Museum on Sisavong Vang Road.

08:00

Breakfast @ Joma
Hands-down the best bakery in Luang Prabang. We love their heavenly scrambled eggs.

13:00

Visit the Royal Palace.

16:00

Stop by L’Etrange
Tucked away behind Phousi Mountain is L’etranger Books and Tea, a charming bookshop & cafe where you can buy or rent books, browse art displays and grab a cup of tea, brewed from the more than 70 varieties available. [FYI, at 19:00 the tearoom turns into an independent cinema!]

19:00

Dinner at Maison Souvannapjourn
A romantic restaurant set in a villa that once belonged to Lao’s crown prince

Stay

LA RÉSIDENCE PHOU VAO

DAY 3

LUANG PRABANG

10:00

Take a barge 16 miles upstream to the Pak Ou Caves.

The famous "Buddha caves" are massive limestone caverns along the Mekong river.

Devotees have placed more than 4,500 Buddha miniatures in the cave.

18:00

Dinner at Pousi Guest House Restaurant

20:00

The Royal Ballet

The National Dance Theater is located on the grounds of the old palace.

Stay

LA RÉSIDENCE PHOU VAO



DAY 4

LUANG PRABANG

09:00

Rent a bike and tour the countryside.

Complementary @ La Résidence

Phou Vao, who will also offer you routes. Ask them to pack a picnic lunch for you as well.

12:30

Picnic in the countryside

14:00

Mount Phousi

Scale the 355 cement steps. This view of the Mekong valley is one of the most memorable views in Southeast Asia. This city truly basks in the late afternoon's golden glow.

19:00

Sisavangvong Road

At night the streets fills with food stalls hawking assorted curries, buffalo sausages, sweets, salads and grill after grill of delicious roasting meats.

20:00

Checkout the Night Market

Stay

LA RÉSIDENCE PHOU VAO

DAY 5

IN TRANSIT

01:10

Depart Luang Prabang



to: prepare

Fifteen-day tourist visas can be obtained prior to departure from the Lao Embassy in Washington, D.C. or upon arrival at the tiny airport in Luang Prabang (\$30 cash and a small passport-type photo). Passports should be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your arrival. The better hotels in town take credit cards, but nearly everyone else expects cash, so pack plenty of greenbacks to change into fistfuls of Kip (K10,000-U.S.\$1.00). There are plenty of moneychangers along Sisavangvong Road in the middle of town. Two Luang Prabang visitors' websites have links, planning tips, and information on city sights (www.visit-laos.com/where/luangprabang; and asiaforvisitors.com/laos/prabang/index.html).

to: pack

Luang Prabang is firmly in the Southeast Asian tropics, but its highland location makes the city much cooler than Bangkok and other sweltering lowland cities. May to July is the hottest time of year, with daytime temperatures in the mid to high 80s. During winter, temperatures can dip into the mid- 50s at night, but it's almost always sunny and warm by day. If you drop in between July and October, you might want to bring a light raincoat or windbreaker. It's taboo to wear shorts and skirts in Buddhist temples or monasteries, so pack long pants or a sarong for your pilgrimage. Sandals, on the other hand, are just fine.

to: get there

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to: see and do

Don't expect wild and crazy nightlife in a town full of monks. But that's not to say you can't down a cold brew or two around sunset in the open-air bar/cafes along the Mekong. Pass an evening attending a performance of the old Royal Ballet at the National Dance Theater on the grounds of the old palace.

to: stay there

Luang Prabang is blessed with dozens of backpacker hostels, moderately priced guesthouses, and two luxury boutique hotels. But be forewarned that during the tourist high season (Nov.-Jan.) it's awfully difficult to book rooms in the better establishments. Perched on a wooden hillside on the outskirts of the central city, the posh Residence Phou Vao (www.residencephouvao.com) blends traditional Lao architecture, rosewood furnishings, and modern amenities. Many of the 36 rooms boast balconies with sweeping views of the city and Mekong valley. Closer to town is the Maison Souvannaphoum (www.coloursofangsana.com/souvannaphoum), in a villa that once belonged to Lao's crown prince. Among its more enticing features are a romantic French-Lao restaurant overlooking the pool and a luxury spa housed in billowy white tents in the garden. On the cheaper side is the 15-room Three Nagas (www.3nagas.com) not far from the royal palace and the major temples.

to: eat and drink

Without doubt, restaurants at the Phou Vao and Maison Souv serve the best chow in LP. But the food's not bad at many of the cheaper open-air restaurants. Given the city's historical roots, the prevailing cuisines are Laotian (similar to Thai food) and slightly bastardized French. Indy eateries tend to cluster along Sisavangvong just past the old royal palace, as well as the Mekong River front and the back side of Mount Phousi along the banks of the River Khan. Places to try: Pousi Guest House restaurant, Luang Prabang Pizza, Khem Khane restaurant, and the atmospheric Café des Arts.

to: take home

Luang Prabang's street markets overflow with colorful hill tribe textiles. The main handicraft market unfolds as dozens of stalls adjacent to the corner of Sisavangvong and Setthathirat roads. Textiles and T-shirts are the main items for sale here. After dusk, the central portion of Sisavangvong closes to vehicles and a lively Night Market fills the street. Hundreds of hawkers deal in a wide variety of items including paper lanterns, Buddha statues, and hill tribe shoulder bags.