



WORLD DISCOVERY

— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

Laos Express



Novice monks, Luang Prabang.

DAY 1 - Depart from UK.

DAY 2 - Arrive Luang Prabang.

On arrival in Luang Prabang you will be met outside customs by a representative of World Discovery and taken by private car direct to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

DAY 3 - Luang Prabang.

Surrounded by thickly forested mountains and situated at the confluence of the Khan and Mekong rivers, Luang Prabang has a tranquil, old-world charm rarely found in Asia today. This fascinating town was the capital of the Lane Xang (million elephants) kingdom until the mid 16th century. In French colonial times it served as the provincial headquarters of the north, and the heritage is clear to see in the French architecture and careful street planning that blends delightfully with the 30 golden Buddhist temples to create a town rich in atmosphere and history. This morning there is the opportunity to rise early to witness the daily *Tak Bat* or almsgiving. At dawn hundreds of saffron-robed monks move silently through the streets collecting alms (offerings of food). Your guide will explain the background behind this ritual which is still part of everyday life in Laos. Return to your hotel for breakfast. After breakfast your guide will take you on a tour of this beautiful town. Highlights will include the beautiful **Wat Xieng Thong** or 'Golden City Monastery', the National Museum (closed on Tuesdays), once a king's palace, which has a lovely collection of personal effects of the royal family, **Wat Mai**

built in 1796, and **Wat Phu Sii**, reached via 350 steps for a panoramic view over Luang Prabang. The afternoon is free to explore on your own. The city has a wide range of restaurants to suit all tastes and budgets, or you can relax and dine at your hotel.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 4 - Luang Prabang. Pak Ou Caves.

After breakfast take a riverboat trip with your guide on the mighty Mekong River to visit the sacred Pak Ou Buddha Caves. These caves have been home to thousands of Buddha images that were placed here by local people since the 16th century, when King Setthathirat discovered the caves and declared them a holy spot. Today many still pay respect to this ancient tradition. Walk through the caves and then enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before returning to your boat and to Luang Prabang. Continue by car to the village of **Ban Phanom**, where weaving of Lao textiles takes place on traditional wooden looms. The rest of the afternoon and evening is free in Luang Prabang.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 5 - Kuang Sii Waterfall. Fly to Vientiane.

This morning you will travel by car to the **Kuang Sii Waterfall**, where the waters cascade over many calcified tiers and down hundreds of feet into a series of cool, turquoise pools. The water here has a clear blue-green tint due to the high mineral content. You can climb the stairs and look down from various viewpoints on the way to the top. Enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before returning to your hotel in the afternoon to check out and drive to the airport for the short flight to Vientiane, capital city of Laos. You will be met by a representative of World Discovery and taken to your hotel in Vientiane.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 6 - Vientiane.

Vientiane is a low-rise city located on a bend of the Mekong River and is markedly more quaint and easygoing than South East Asia's other busy capitals. First stop this morning is the **Wat Sisaket**, the oldest temple in Vientiane, with its thousands of miniature Buddha statues. Nearby is **Haw Phra Kaew**, once the royal temple of the Lao kings. Other sites you will see include the huge golden **Phra That Luang** monument (pictured) and the adjacent Victory Monument modelled on Paris's Arc de Triomphe. Also visit **Wat Simuang** and **Wat Prakeo**, which was the original home of the Emerald Buddha that today resides in the Royal Palace of Bangkok. Enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before returning to your hotel. The afternoon is at leisure.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 7 - Vientiane. Depart for UK.

At leisure in Vientiane. We have arranged for you to keep your room for a late check out at 18.00. In the evening transfer to the airport for your homeward flight.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 8 - Arrive UK.

Arrive London Heathrow in the morning.