

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PROGRAMME

### Luang Prabang

This UNESCO World Heritage Site is the former capital of Lao PDR, and you will see everything from golden-roofed temples to vestiges of colonial French architecture here. Buddhist monasteries abound in Luang Prabang, and early every morning, monks process through the streets collecting alms (their food for the day). Luang Prabang is a small city, easily explored by foot or bike.

### **The Wats of Luang Prabang**



The former royal capital in **Lao PDR** and an important spiritual city for centuries, **Luang Prabang** has seen the construction of no less than 66 temples in its lifetime. After numerous wars, 32 are left standing today.

### **Wat Xieng Thong**



Built in 1560 by King Setthethirat, this magnificent temple has the classic architecture of Luang Prabang, with ornate roofs that sweep low to the ground. It also has many other buildings including a funeral chapel.

The main temple building houses a large Buddha that is surrounded by offerings. To one side is an almost life-size gold statue of a venerated monk. Pilgrims can add gold leaf to the statue, which also has many offerings, as well as a photo of the monk. The walls and the wooden columns supporting the ceiling are richly decorated with geometric patterns and bizarre scenes of what may, or may not, have been daily life.

Many exterior temple walls and railings are decorated with colorful glass mosaics, and one wall displays a large tree of life.

The funeral chapel is also decorated with more mosaics and numerous Buddha's. There is also a 12-metre high golden funeral chariot, complete with dragon/serpent heads, and funeral urns for each member of the royal family.



### **Wat Sensoukharam**



Wat Sensoukharam is also known as Wat Sen. This temple is located in the Old Quarter area in Luang Prabang. The temple was originally built in 1718 with 100,000 stones from the Mekong River, for that the name in Laotian means “Temple of 100,000 treasures”. The whole temple was restored in 1957. If you are walking from Phou Si Mountain along Sakkarin Road towards Wat Xieng Thong, you will pass Wat Sen.

### **Wat Mai**



Several large temples are situated around Phou Si’s base. Wat Mai Suwannaphumaham (“new monastery”), is only a century old, and has steep-tiered red roofs with a stunning gold interior.

### **Wat Visoun**



Nearby Wat Visoun Narath (or Wisunalat), is also known as Makmo, or watermelon, because of its domed roof. Surrounded by trees, it’s not the most highly decorated Wat in the city, but its crumbling old stone is beautiful nonetheless.

Wats Aham, That Luang, Manolom and Xieng Muan are all particularly delightful, and well worth a look during your stay in Luang Prabang. Whilst many of the original Wats have survived the years, just as many are not entirely original, having been destroyed and rebuilt or restored.

**Remember that**, although the Laos are incredibly patient, there is some temple etiquette to follow. Remove your shoes inside the buildings, avoid baring your legs or shoulders, try not to point your feet at the altar and, if you are a woman, do not tempt the monks! Ladies should not really touch the monks at all - if you want to hand them something, place it on a nearby table.

## **Sites in Luang Prabang**

### **Mount Phou Si**



Mount Phou Si, topped with a gold-roofed stupa, is the hill just below the Nam Khan river, next to Sisavangvong Road. It is a great place to start looking around; you will get an amazing view over the city as you set out, and many shrines along either of the hill's two paths. Do not miss 14<sup>th</sup> century Wat Pra Buddhabaht, with its traditional Buddha footprint grotto, on the way down.

### **National Museum**



This Royal Place Museum also known as “Haw Kham” was once Lao’s Royal Palace. It is a house with lot of historical items. Every item tells a story so you will learn quiet a lot about Laos History and about Laos Royal.

Built in 1904, it features a blend of Lao traditional and French style. It was built for King Sisavangvong and his family during the French colonial era. After the death of King Sisavangvong, the crown Prince Savang Vatthana and his family were the last to occupy the palace. After the revolution in 1975, the building was taken over by the government. The palace was then converted into a national museum and opened to the public in 1995.

In the palace compound, there are several buildings including the Royal Barge Shelter, a conference hall, and Haw Pha Bang (a ornate pavilion) that houses the standing Buddha statue called Prabang. In the pass the Prabang statue and many other religious artifacts were housed in the palace, the front wing.

Also in the compound is a building that houses the royal car collection. It is a small collection, mostly American cars from the 1950s to 1970s. Behind the garages is another building which has a gallery for rotating exhibitions.

## Night Market



Luang Prabang night market is something not to be missed when visiting this charming city. It is an amazing sight and offers the most extensive collection of handicrafts in the country. The market is open daily from 5pm to about 10pm. It is located along Sisavangvong Road from the Royal Palace Museum. Every evening a kilometre-long stretch of road is closed to vehicle traffic and turned into a walking and shopping street while the market takes place.

More than 300 handicraft vendors sell their hand-made products here every night. The market showcases an extensive variety of handicrafts made by local ethnic groups. On display are many types of textiles, exquisite ceramics, antiques, paintings, coffee and tea, quilts, shoes, silver, bags, bamboo lamps of different shades and sizes, and even rare spices.

Shopping fans will be pleased to know that they are also helping the local people when they spend their money. Buying stuff here will not only help the traders to earn a living, but it will also empower the local families who produce goods to further develop their skills and help them get out of poverty.

## Traditional Art and Ethnology Centre



The Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre is a museum in the UNESCO World Heritage town of Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. It is the only independent non-profit museum and resource centre in Laos dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of the traditional arts and lifestyles of the country's many and diverse ethnic groups.

TAEC was founded in 2006 and opened its doors in July 2007, featuring professional exhibitions on the ethnic cultures of Laos, a Museum Shop promoting handicrafts from village artisans, and Le Patio Café. In its first four years, TAEC welcomed over 38,000 Lao and international visitors, and has rapidly emerged as a regional leader in cultural heritage management and community development.

Today, the Centre is engaged in a broad range of museum and community engagement activities, reflecting its commitment to supporting living ethnic minority communities to preserve and promote their cultural heritage while looking towards the future.

## **OCK POP TOK (Living Crafts Centre)**



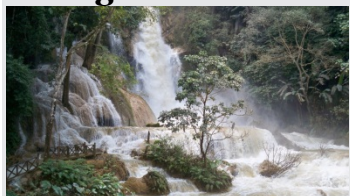
Set in a tropical Mekong garden it opens doors to learning about Lao textiles and crafts. Bringing alive our concept of east meets west, the LCC is a place where you can meet silk weavers, craft artisans and silkworms and learn about textiles and take classes. We welcome you to join a free-guided tour, sign up for a class, eat delicious Lao food, or just relax by the riverside with a book and a drink.

Weavers at the Living Craft Centre work on traditional looms practicing the age-old techniques brought here to Laos over 1200 years ago. Intern artisans from our Village Weaver Projects work alongside the Ock Pop Tok weavers learning new skills that they in turn take home to their villages. The exchanges taking place at the Living Craft Center have proven to keep alive the spirit that was prevalent during the prime of the Silk Road and all that was instrumental then in the emergence of the silk industry and appreciation of silk textiles around the world.

Take the chance to discover the beauty and secrets of Lao textiles: silk weaving, natural dyes, batik drawing, bamboo weaving all while enjoying the beautiful tropical garden and the mighty Mekong River. Spend some time with us. You'll love it here.

## **Sites around Luang Prabang**

### **Kuang Si Waterfall**



Take a leisure tour through the National Park with Black Bear rescue center towards the Kuang Si Waterfalls by Private Tuk Tuk or Mini Van. Enjoy feeling the mist of the cool, turquoise waters of the different waterfalls.

Explore through the park to the top of the main waterfall from where you can enjoy breathtaking panoramic views. Then, return to the pools at the bottom of the falls for a refreshing swim.

Admission to the waterfalls is 20,000 kip and transport can be arranged by tuk tuk or mini-van. Make sure to bring your swimsuit.

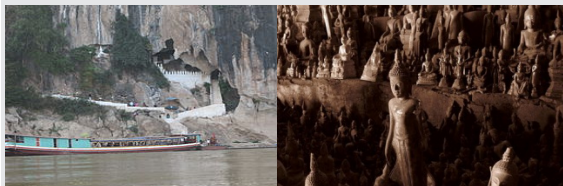


### **Tad Sae Waterfall**



The Tad Sae Waterfall is a stepped waterfall with lime deposits, about 15 km southeast from Luang Prabang. You can get there by tuk tuk or mini -van. It is an ideal place for a nice picnic or just to enjoy nature.

### **Pak Ou Caves**



The Pak Ou Cave in Luang Prabang is a grotto with hundreds of devotional Buddha images inside. It is situated next to the river and can be reached by slow boat or tuk tuk. There are a few interesting villages in the area on its way that tourists can visit. Each village has its own special industry. For example, making rice wine, ceramics, weaving or blacksmithing.

### **Elephant Village**



The Elephant Village is a privately owned elephant camp and tour destination approved by the Laos government and operated by International specialists and volunteers who focus on protection and rehabilitation of elephants in Laos. It is in a lush jungle valley on the banks of the Nam Khan River. We are conveniently located just 15 kilometres, southeast of Luang Prabang in the ancient village of Xieng Lom.

Elephant Village gives rescued elephants a new home where they are free from abusive work. Elephant Village provides local villagers a better livelihood, so they can stop their slash and burn tradition.

### **Tour Programmes**

- Half Day Elephant Riding
- 1 Day Mahout Experience
- 2 Day Mahout Experience
- Full-day Elephant Experience & “Trail of Falls”
- Biking to Elephant Village & Elephant Riding

## Outdoor Adventures Tours



Tiger Trail Outdoor Adventures Laos offers Fair Trek tours, a project with the aim to support remote villages in Laos by generating alternative income, support inter-cultural exchange, education and development.

## Luang Prabang Fair Trek



Fair Trek is a project set up in 2007 by Tiger Trail Outdoor Adventures in Luang Prabang. Aim of the project is to generate alternative income, support inter-cultural exchange, education and development for the remote villages in Laos.

Fair Trek supports tourism in regions that have little job opportunities and at the same time takes the carrying capacity of the communities into account, in order to prevent negative impacts from tourism, both socially and environmentally.

The project connects governmental offices with local companies and villages. The aim of the program is not only to collect money, but also to encourage ownership and self-management within their communities resulting in sustainable development and tourism alike.

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