

EXPLORE!

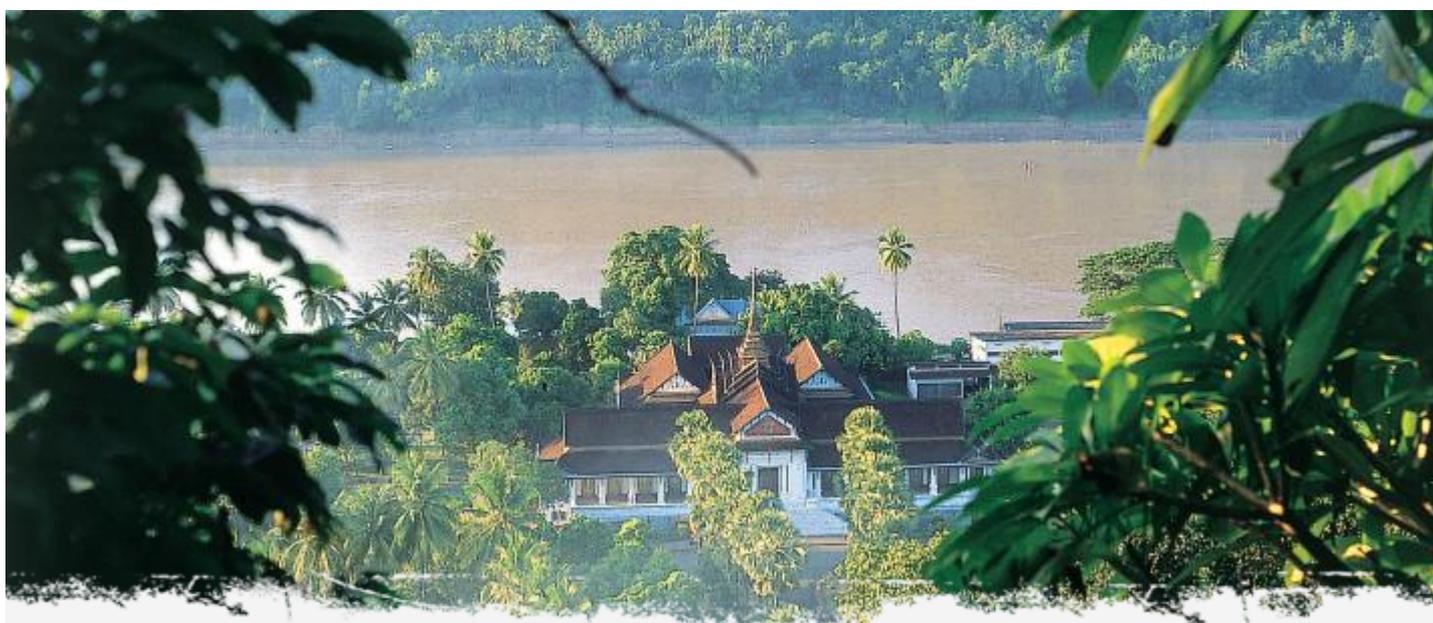
TRIP NOTES



Spirit of Laos (LA 2018)



TRIPDURATION
16
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Full On

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: LA

Trip Highlights - Spirit of Laos

- ✓ Nong Khiaw - Small rustic town on the Ou River, surrounded by limestone hills
- ✓ Luang Prabang - Sleepy French Colonial riverside town with over 30 gilded temples
- ✓ Plain of Jars - Mysterious and remote site of huge 2,000 year-old huge stone jars
- ✓ Don Khong Island - Explore the 4,000 islands region of southern Laos

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 6 nights Simple Hotel
4 nights Standard Hotel
2 nights Standard Bungalow
2 nights Standard Lodge
1 night Premium Hotel

Included Meals: 15 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Vientiane
End Point: Trip ends: Bangkok
Transport: Bus, Boat, Flight
Countries: Laos, Thailand

Spirit Of Laos

An exciting adventure that moves through the length and breadth of the most charming country in South East Asia. Cruise along the Mekong River in traditional slowboats, passing jagged limestone peaks as we travel to the ancient capital Luang Prabang. We visit the capital Vientiane, meet friendly hilltribe villagers and discover the mysterious Plain of Jars. Ending in the deep south we explore the inland Mekong Delta and raging waterfalls.

Why Book this trip

This fantastic tour is a real in-depth look at Laos, one of Indochina's most charming and least visited destinations. The tour is designed to take you beyond the main visited cities of Luang Prabang and Vientiane. You will see more remote parts of the country such as Phonsavan and the 4000 islands region deep in the south. The tour also gives you the chance to sample a little of Bangkok too.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

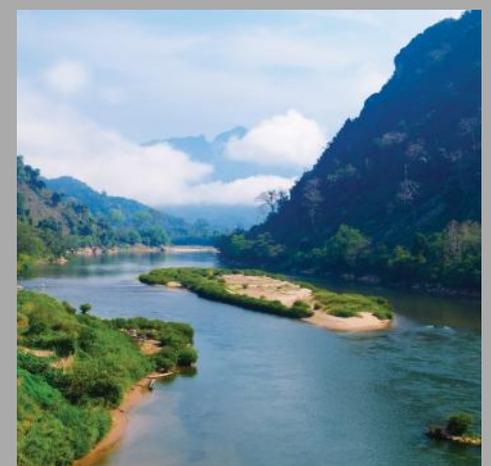
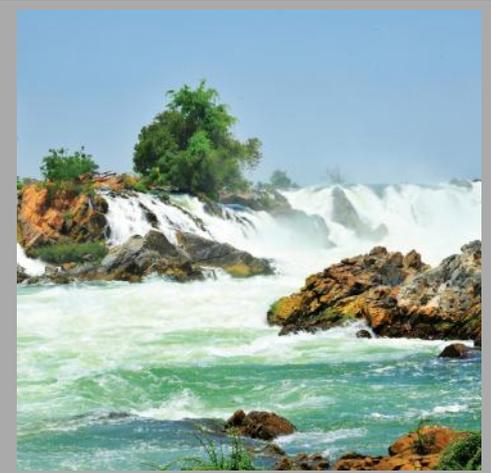
Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.



Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

DAY 1 Join trip in Vientiane

Arrive in Vientiane and check in to the hotel, where the rest of the day is free at leisure. You may choose to visit the COPE museum, a not-for-profit organisation set up to provide prosthetic limbs to the many victims that have fallen victim to the unexploded ordinance (UXO) left behind from the Vietnam war. The museum does an excellent job of giving some of the background to the bombing campaign, along with showcasing the important work the COPE foundation is doing. Most report it to be a sobering, emotive but rewarding experience that enhances one's understanding of this fascinating country.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 In Vientiane, sightseeing in the Lao Capital; afternoon visit to Buddha Park

This morning we explore some of the main sights including the Victory Gate, the That Luang stupa (said to contain a bone of Buddha) and Wat Sisaket which is packed with fine Buddha images. This afternoon we head out to Buddha Park, a curious green expanse just 30 minutes from the city that houses a beguiling selection of Buddhist and Hindu statues.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Fly to Phonsavan, discover the ancient capital of Muang Khong

We make our way to the airport this morning, leaving the Lao capital behind on our short flight to Phonsavan. This region saw heavy and sustained aerial bombardment during the so-called 'Secret War', a campaign that left Laos as the highest bombed nation, per capita in the world. After lunch we head out to the old capital, Muang Khong, passing mainly Hmong and Black Thai villages on the way. Lots of military paraphernalia cluster the villages such as old mine casings and bomb shells which have been turned into flower pots or cattle troughs. Xieng Khouang town was rebuilt in 1975, but we can still see the remains of temples, stupas and French colonial buildings.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 In Phonsavan, explore the mystical Plain of Jars

Today we will explore the 3 sites that make up the Plain Of Jars. Nobody knows how long the jars have actually been here or what they were used for; some speculate they are funeral urns dating back some 2000 years. Another theory says that they were probably made to contain and transport 'Lao Lao', a glutinous wet rice which is boiled with yeast and left to ferment in large jars. It is believed that they were prepared for a huge celebration, which, for some reason was disrupted whilst the jars were being transported, as other jars in smaller quantities can be found on two other sites close by. Despite being one of the most strategic battlegrounds of the Indochina War, most jars were unharmed and remain a complete mystery even today. We spend time discovering the plain of undulating green fields where the 300 giant stones jars are scattered, the largest of them weighing six tons and measuring four metres high. Later in the afternoon we transfer back to Phonsavan, where the rest of the afternoon at leisure.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Scenic drive along mountain roads to Luang Prabang

Today is set aside for the long drive west to Luang Prabang. We make our way along winding mountainous roads reaching an altitude of 1500 m at the highest point. We aim to break up the journey with short stops along the way at local villages. The total journey time will be approximately seven hours, depending on local conditions.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 In Luang Prabang, walking tour of temples; free afternoon

All the main sights of interest are close together, so this morning we walk around the various wats including Wat Xieng Thong (the Golden Temple built in 1559) which is strikingly decorated in brilliant red and gold designs, with an imposing tiled roof and mosaic dragon motifs. We also include Wat Visoun site of the impressive Thad Makmo Stupa. The afternoon is free and you may like to climb to the small temple on top of Mount Phousi and enjoy the sunset and fine views over the town.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 From Luang Prabang visit Kuang Si waterfalls; free afternoon

This morning we include a trip to the nearby beautiful Kuang Si waterfalls. This afternoon is left free to explore the local area - perhaps by tuk tuk to the nearby blacksmiths village of Ban Hat Hien or the papermaking village of San Khong. Alternatively the craft shops, lively market and eclectic bars and restaurants of Luang Prabang itself are more than enough to occupy those wishing to spend more time in this most popular of Lao destinations. A coffee in a riverside bar watching the world go by can be the ideal way to spend an afternoon.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Drive to Nong Khiaw; afternoon is free to explore

Today we set off by road for the scenic town of Nong Khiaw. The condition of the roads in this part of the country is very much dependent on the weather and we should be prepared for some landslides and delays. The scenery however is spectacular - it's mostly forested with 'slash and burn' cultivation very much in evidence, along with the many hill tribe villages along the way. Slash and burn usually takes place in April and May, when rural fires can be witnessed and smoke can fill the air often drifting into nearby towns and creating a hazy sky. We plan to arrive in Nong Khiaw in the early afternoon where the rest of the day is free to spend at leisure in this sleepy river-side town.

Overnight: **Standard Bungalow**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 9 In Nong Khiaw, visit ethnic villages and kayak on the Nam Ou River

Nong Khiaw is a small settlement located upon the banks of the gentle Nam Ou River, overshadowed on all sides by towering limestone karsts and lush forested hills. This morning we take a longboat upriver to the remote village of Muang Ngoi Neu, where this we will be able to chat to the locals and learn a little about the traditional way of life in this rural part of Laos. We plan to have lunch beside a waterfall, where it's possible to take a refreshing dip in the natural pools there. After lunch we will take to the river again, but this time on kayaks as we paddle downstream back to Nong Khiaw. The total time kayaking will be approximately two hours, and those not wishing to kayak can return to Nong Khiaw by longboat.

Overnight: **Standard Bungalow**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Longboat down river to Luang Prabang

This morning we board boats for our journey further down the Nam Ou River - south towards Luang Prabang. The river journey is stunning, passing many villages and forests, with the back drop of large rolling mountains. We must leave the boat at Dong Ngern in order to avoid the Nam Ou River dam, from here we continue by road to Luang Prabang. On arrival we board longtail boats on the Mekong River to visit the Pak Ou Caves, where we climb steps up the limestone cliffs to reach the sacred Buddhist shrine. Although now abandoned by the monks, there is an altar for incense burning, flower offerings and numerous rock shelves crammed with thousands of Buddha images of all shapes and sizes. We continue our journey to Luang Prabang, the country's former capital.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Fly to Pakse; visit Wat Phu Champassak; Journey by boat and road to Don Khong Island

Today we fly south to Pakse and then take a charter boat down the Mekong onto Champassak district and Don Daeng Island, where we aim to explore typical village life in this sleepy corner of Laos. This peaceful island is located inside the Champassak Cultural and Natural Heritage Landscape, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We then rejoin the mainland at Ban Muang where we change our transport to a charter bus to drive further south to Don Khong making a stop along the route at Oupmoung Temple.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Explore 4,000 islands region; take dolphin boat safari and visit Khong Phapheng waterfalls

Don Khong is the largest island in the Khong district which is known as the 'Four Thousand Islands' of Southern Laos. It is here, almost on the Cambodian border that the Mekong splits to create a maze of channels and also where the great river reaches its widest point. Exploring by boat and on foot through the watery landscape, we visit some traditional villages of the Lao Loum to witness the daily life of these people. We will also visit parts of the Old French Railway, built at the turn of the century to avoid the treacherous rapids caused by the many channels. Our explorations will include visiting Don Khon Island where we take small boats for possible sightings of Irrawaddy river dolphins. Later in the afternoon we head back to the mainland to visit a part of the Khong Phapheng Waterfalls which is supposedly the widest in South East Asia.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Drive to Tad Lo on Bolaven Plateau

This morning before heading north again to Tad Lo waterfalls, we travel through the western edge of the Bolaven plateau. On the way we stop to visit Wat Phou temple, an impressive Khmer temple dating back to the 6th century and considered to be one of the archaeological wonders of Laos. Originally built at the base of a sacred mountain - a symbol of Shiva to Hindus - Wat Phu became a Buddhist shrine in later centuries. Every February pilgrims from all over Thailand and Laos travel here in their thousands to celebrate the full moon festival and participate in various local competitions. At this time Wat Phu becomes decorated by offerings left to appease the earth spirit of Champassak. We plan to visit Tad Phasum waterfall before continuing onto Tad. Here the soil is very fertile and so cultivation of Arabica & Robusta coffee and tea is the most important trade, which is complimented by small scale agriculture of fruit, vegetables, cardamom and rattan. The area around Tad Lo is also the centre for several Mon- Khmer ethnic groups who live around the plateau, and you may like to walk through the forests here.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 14 Explore Tad Lo and the surround ethnic villages

The morning has been left free to relax and enjoy your picturesque surroundings. After lunch we plan to make a short walk out to some of the remote minority villages in the area, including Alak and Nge where the local villagers are keen to retain a very traditional way of life, with traditions that go back hundreds of years.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 15 Drive to Pakse and fly to Bangkok

We leave Laos behind this morning, driving first to Pakse before catching a flight into Thailand's capital, Bangkok. The afternoon has been left free for exploring this frenetic city, or perhaps for some last minute shopping for souvenirs at one of the city's many markets.

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 16 Trip ends in Bangkok

Trip ends this morning after breakfast.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 15 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

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Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Laos

Lunch £: 2.00 - 4.00

Dinner £: 6.00

Thailand

Lunch £: 3.00 - 5.00

Dinner £: 4.00 - 8.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Laos

Bottle of Beer £: 0.75

Water £: 0.75 - 1.50

Thailand

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 0.50

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Luang Prabang - Half day city tour (including the Royal Palace Museum and arts and Ethnology Centre) US\$ 43

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 35.

Foreign Exchange

Laos

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in most major towns and cities including Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Vang Vieng and Savannekhet.

Credit Card Acceptance: There is very limited credit card use.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques are exchangeable only in the main towns.

Local Currency: Kip.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US\$ are the easiest to exchange in Laos.

Where to Exchange: All major currencies and travellers cheques are exchangeable in the main towns.

Thailand

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in Bangkok but are limited on the islands.

Credit Card Acceptance: Major stores and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: Can be exchanged at banks and exchange offices throughout the tour although rates may not be as favourable.

Local Currency: Thai Baht

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend that you bring your money in GBP or US\$.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns and on the islands - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Thailand: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens for a stay of less than 30 days. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining on entry to Thailand. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Laos: A single visa is required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens and can be obtained on arrival. The visa on arrival costs 30USD for New Zealand and Australian citizens, 35USD for UK & US citizens and 42USD for Canadian citizens. For other nationalities the price varies between US\$30-42. One passport sized photo is required to arrange this.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Vaccinations & Protection

Laos

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Thailand

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and infectious hepatitis. Although not compulsory, travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Laos

The area of Laos and Thailand is tropical 'cool' from November to February, (15 to 27 Degrees Centigrade); 'hot' from March to May (up to 38 Degrees); 'wet' from June to October (rainy, hot and muggy). Bangkok and lowland areas are sticky all year round, but the northern highlands (Luang Prabang) are more temperate with a drier heat. The so-called 'cool' season can get very cold in the uplands at night and in the morning, bring a fleece.

Thailand

Generally hot with high humidity. There is some rainfall from April to September with most days being hot (around 33 Degrees) and a light breeze on the islands. If it does rain, it will be more of a heavy tropical downpour that lasts a few hours. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>.

Clothing

Lightweight rainwear is advisable all year. Bring a fleece to wear in the highlands as well as a hat and gloves in winter (Dec-Feb).

Equipment

Bring a torch, insect repellent, a waterbottle, sun glasses, sun hat and high factor sun cream.

Footwear

Walking shoes, trainers & sandals.

Luggage: On Tour

Should consist of a main piece of baggage and a daypack (suitcases are not recommended).

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Laos

Population: 6,800,000

Size of Country: 236,800 sq km

Major Language: Lao

Religion: Buddhist

Time Difference to GMT: +7

Thailand

Population: 67,000,000

Size of Country: 514,000 sq km

Major Language: Thai

Religion: Buddhism

Time Difference to GMT: +7

Electric Supply & Plugs

Laos

2 Pin Flat

Thailand

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group

(www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2018 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2018. 2019/20 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2019.

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